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ISSUE NO. 26

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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1999



aaron sprinkle

sackcloth fashion

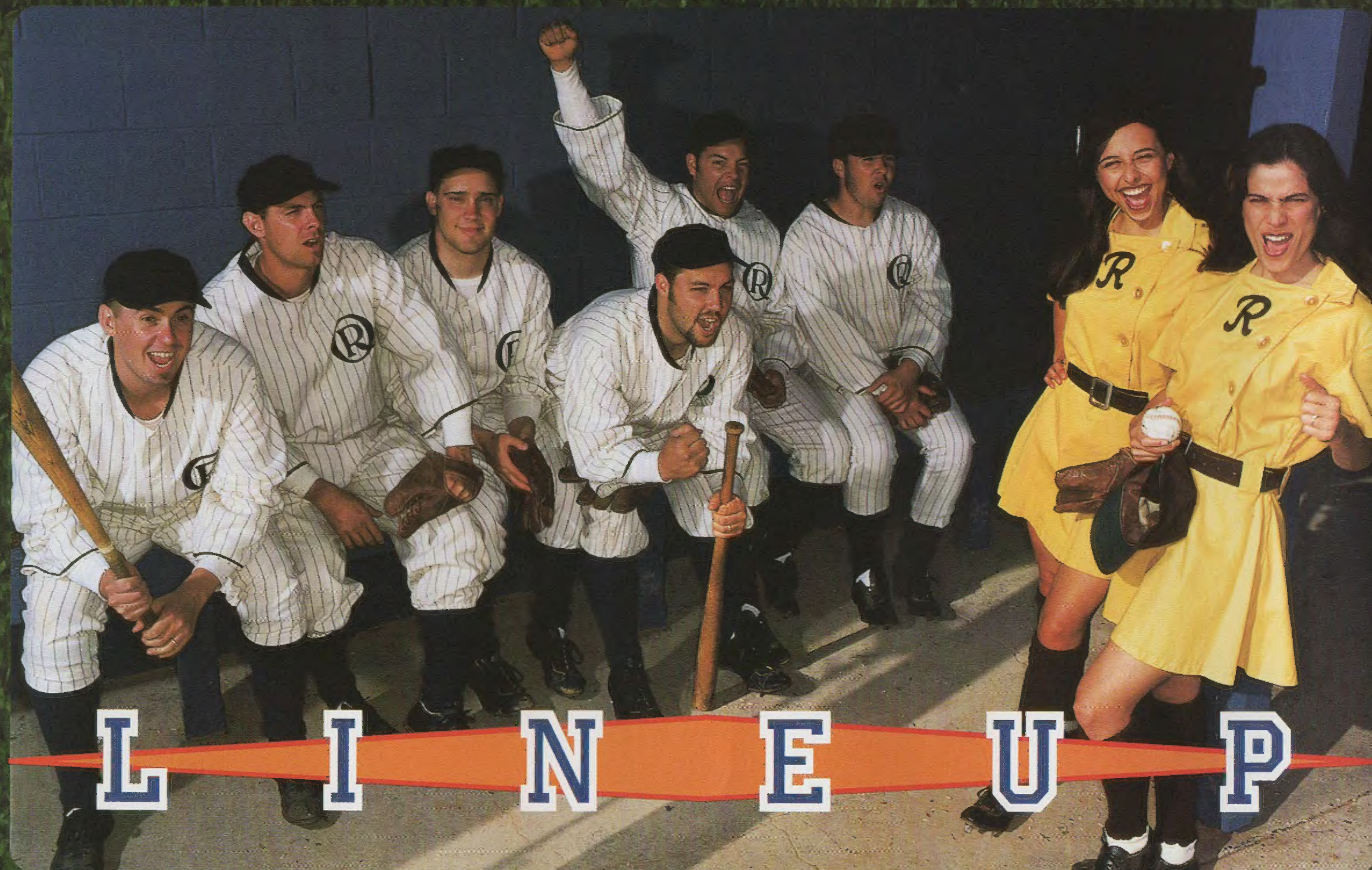
blame lucy

.rod laver

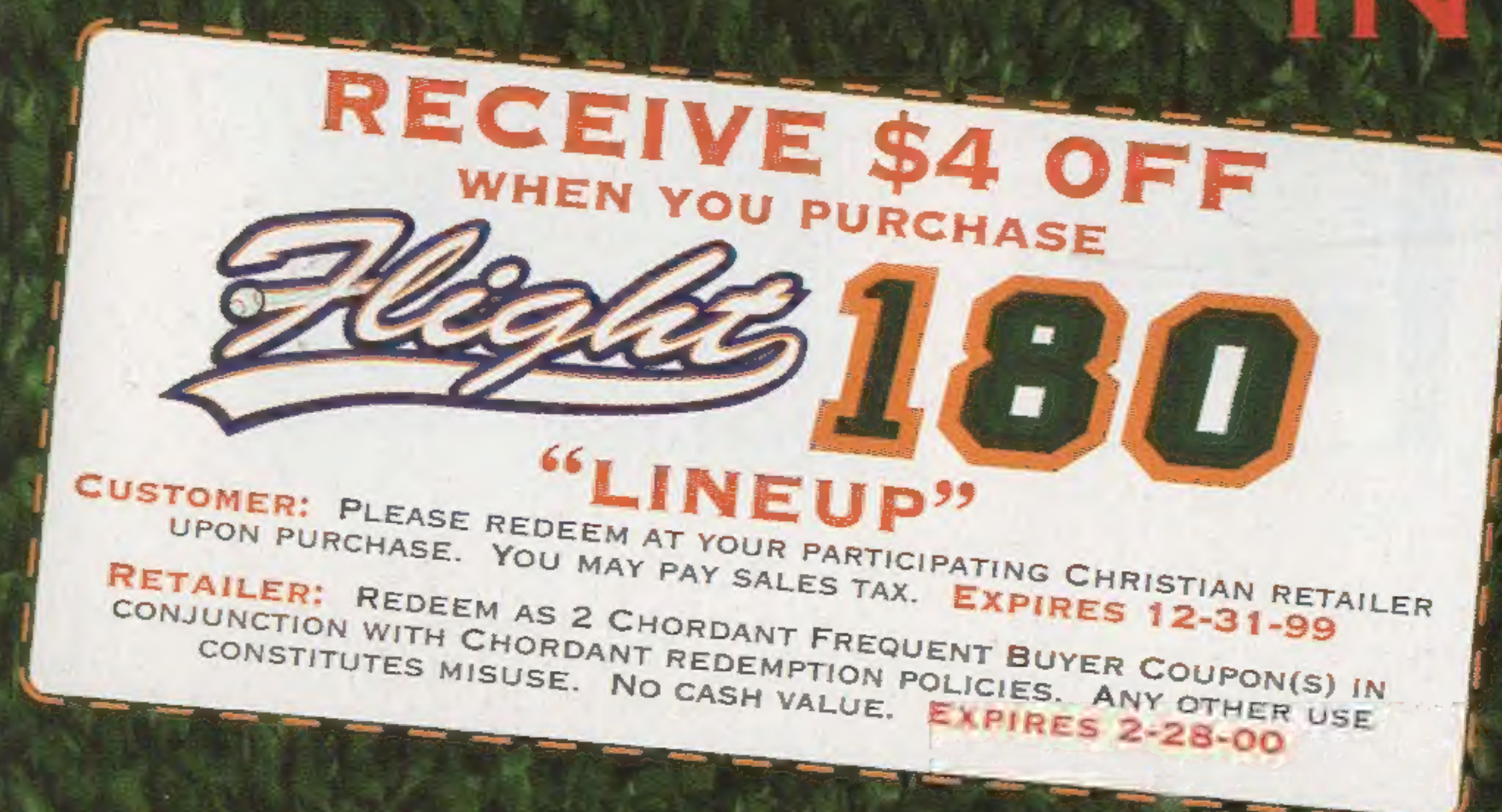


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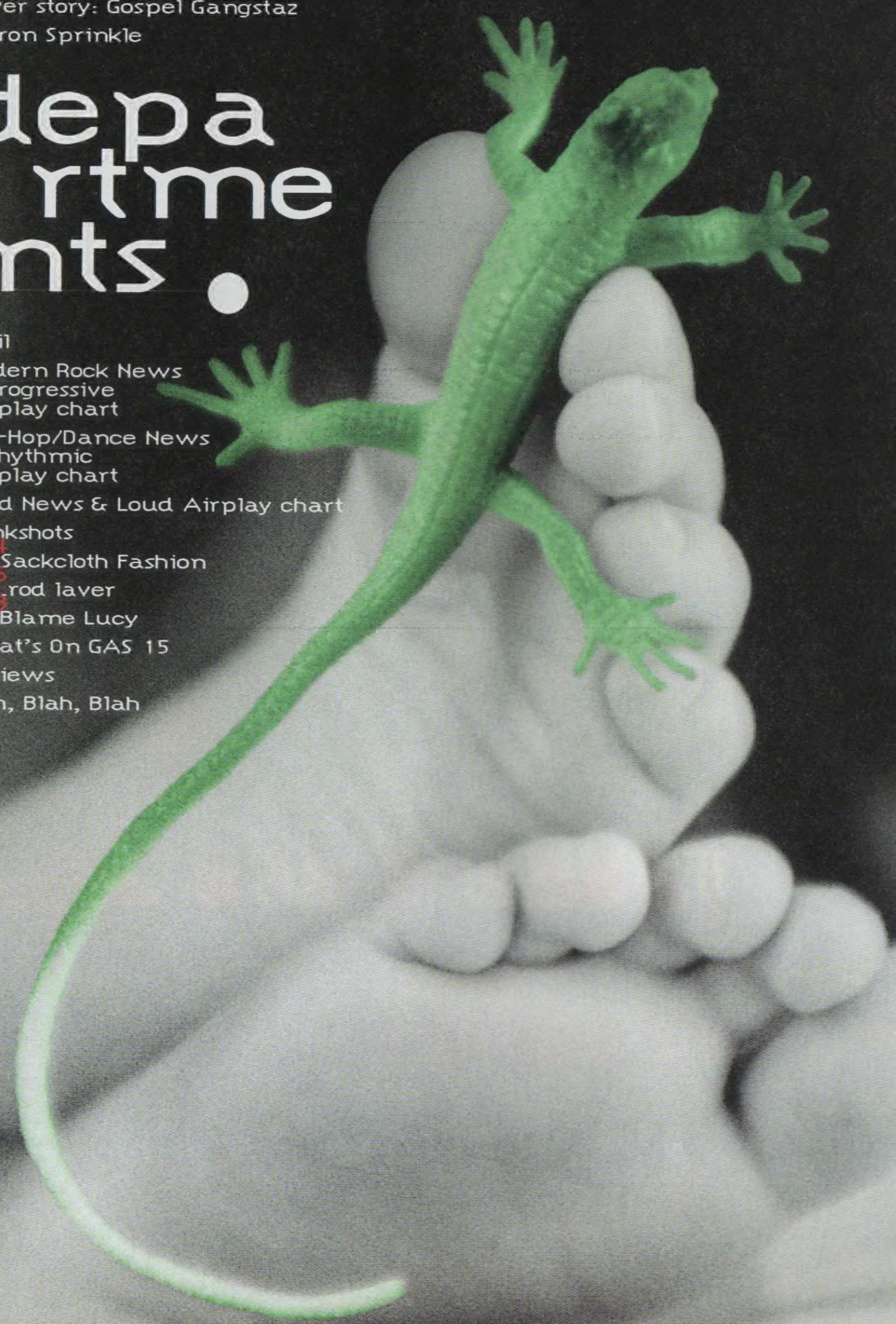
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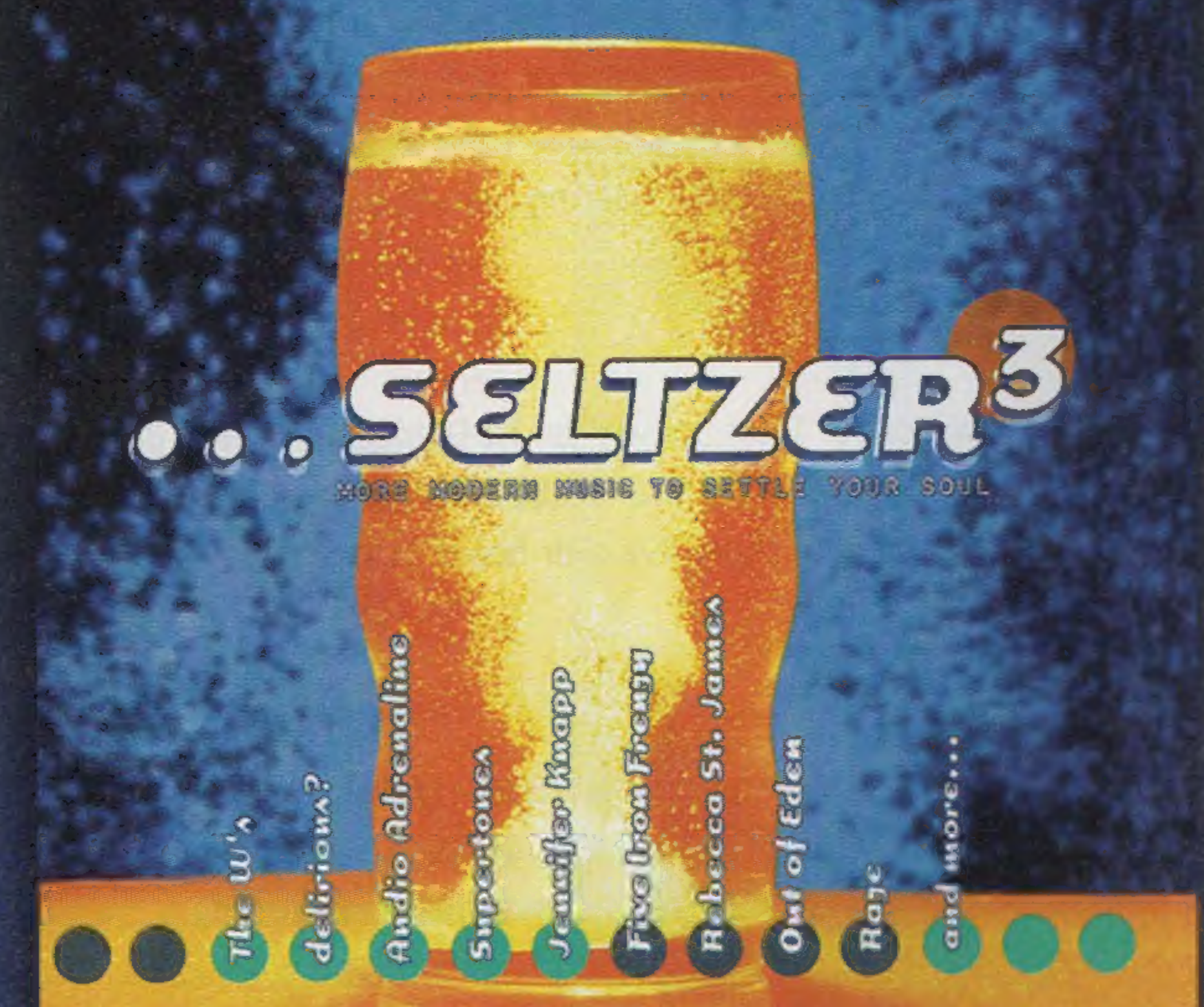
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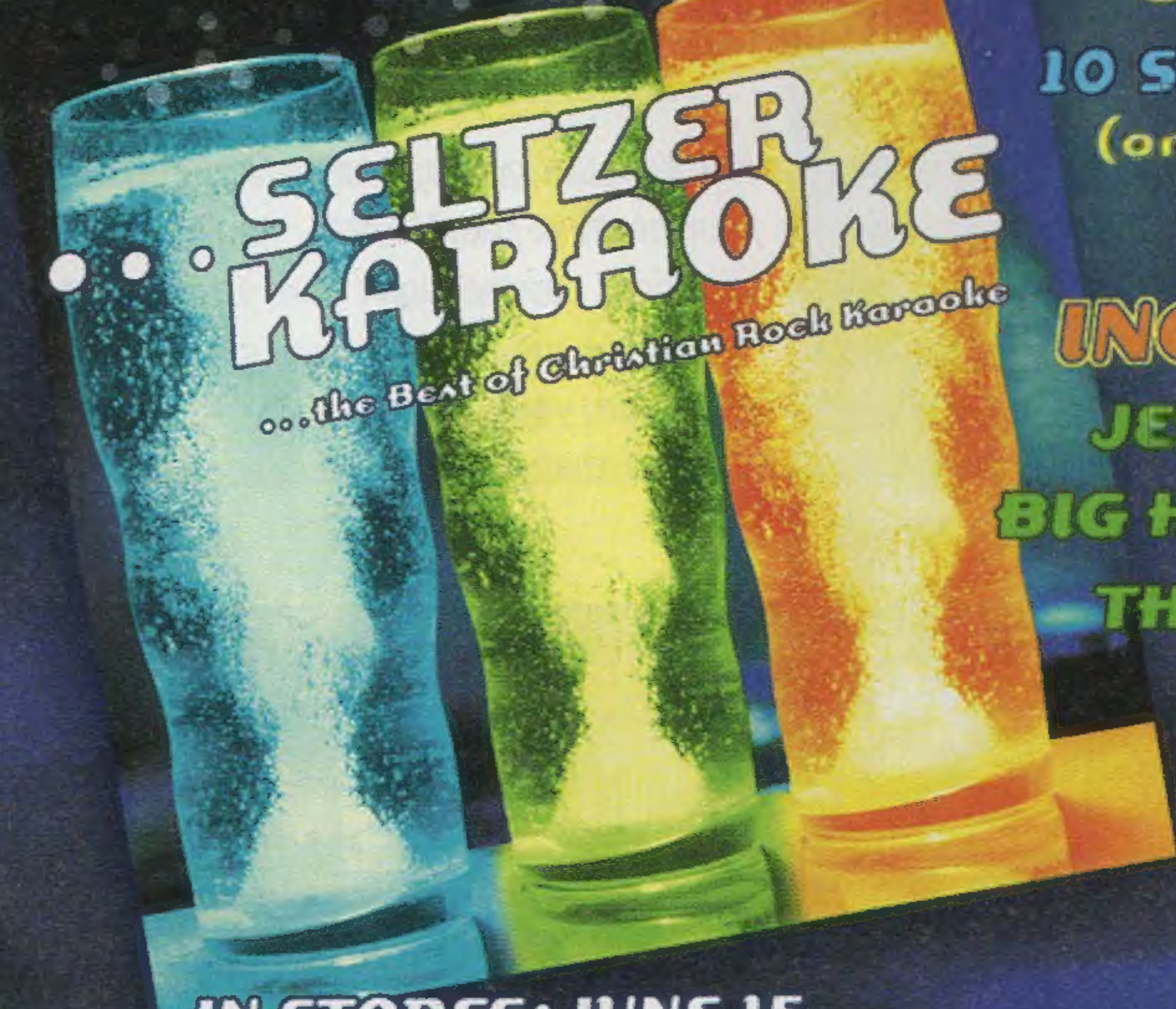


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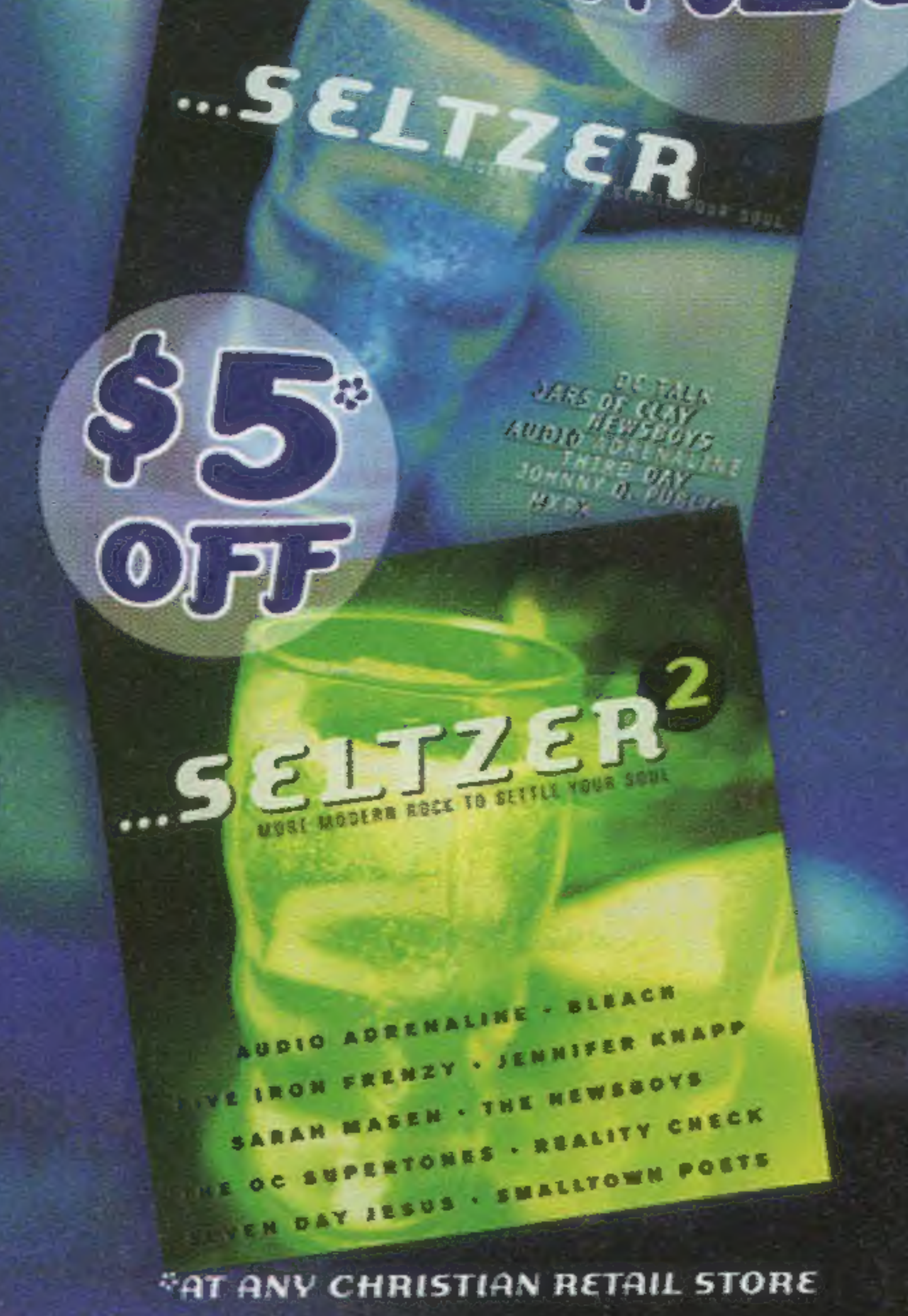
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In the most recent "Blah, Blah, Blah" the author wrote of "Krispy" M&M's. However, if the author had ever actually eaten Krispy M&M's, he would know crispy is spelled with a "C." I recommend you only write about what you know.  
Danika Klyve  
via the Internet

*We've found that people tend to feel better when they're addressed in terms of endearment ("babycake," "sugarlips," etc.).*

I am in a ska-punk group just getting started called Reckless Abandon; it's encouraging to see a mag that's promoting alternative Christian music. Even though I get a kick out of seeing your responses to some of the stupid things sent in, I kinda resent your responses to the sincere readers who are looking for information. But I do salute you for the "Blah, Blah, Blah" section. It is often insightful in its own weird, twisted way.  
Galen "Brody" Broaddus  
Moweaqua, IL

*Thanks for your letter, babycake.*

I don't have the B.O.B. CD yet, but was wondering if you guys could hook me up with some lyrics to the song "Mission Trip to Mexico." Our church is leaving with some kids for Mexico and they wanted a recording of the song and some lyrics.  
Bryan Nye  
via the Internet

*Hey, aren't you the science guy? I really enjoyed the episode where you explained how matter expands and contracts when subjected to various temperatures. Very informative. For lyrics, you might check out the liner notes in the Bunch of Believers CD.*

I just bought the BEC collection *Moms Like Us Too*, and I have one question: What was BEC thinking when they signed Project 86? The rest of the CD is great, with phat tracks by Joy Electric and Fold Zandura. I even enjoy Value Pac. But when I heard Project 86, I couldn't listen to their song again. In the CD, their music was described as "drawn from the poetically angry style of Henry

Rollins and fused with an intensity that can be described as downright hectic." Is this the way a Christian band should want to be labeled? "Angry and hectic"?  
Nate Jenkins  
via the Internet

Just out of curiosity, are there any girl punk bands? My friend Josh and I thought it would be pretty cool if there were.  
Rachel Christensen  
via the Internet

*The complete lack of evidence is the surest sign the conspiracy is working.*

The Danielson review in your Sixpence issue [#24] disappointed me. Calling Daniel's voice "distracting" was purely the work of ignorance. I have listened to Danielson for a while and have always felt his voice is a very emotional stimulant. I'm sorry if the reviewer couldn't find himself getting into the Danielson Famile's quirky grooves, but they've got more musical originality then more than half the Top 40 groups the reviewer is probably used to hearing.  
Stu Hood  
via the Internet

I just heard the song "Idiot Boksen" by Tri-Danielson on *Gas Collection 13*. I hope it was a joke, because it was the dumbest and most annoying thing I've ever heard in my life.  
Amber Echeuarria  
Crete, IL

I just want to say that the latest issue (#24) of 7ball was excellent. The new set-up was great. I liked how you gave listings for new releases and charts according to the genres.  
Adam L. Yates  
via the Internet

Hey, I just wanted to say you guys rock and I love the *Gas Collection* CDs. Could you maybe not put so much rap on there? I hate rap. It isn't music, just the same sounds over and over again. The people wanting more need some serious counseling.  
Kristina Day  
via the Internet

*No, a person who listens to their Rice Krispies, gets offended and throws the bowl on the floor because they "want to watch them suffer" needs some serious counseling.*

I noticed people seem to comment on your sense of humor in the letter section a lot. Maybe they don't both-

er reading the rest of the mag or something, cause that's only the beginning. You guys keep it interesting throughout, so hats off. You've gotta love the unexpected additions here and there, even if they don't always (or ever) make sense. Hey, you guys must be living la vida loca. Que se diviertan.  
Jeannie Rose Field  
via the Internet

*You know, you're not really living la vida loca if every time they describe you as "hot" they add "and sweaty."*

I just read the review of Plumb's sophomore release [#24] and I think your reviewer is wrong. Tiffany Arbuckle does not have to intimate her life story to the public to connect artistically with her audience. I bought the CD and was very touched by it, even if their efforts were not "unique" and "defining" by your standards. The album still connected with me on a deeper level.  
Sarah Bryan  
via the Internet

OK, so I was on the swell 7ball website, looking through all the back issues. I noticed you didn't have one review or article on my all-time favorite band, Waterdeep! Can you please, please, pleeease do an article on them?  
Krista Pederson  
via the Internet

*The November/December 7ball will have a big, fat, juicy article on Waterdeep. Except for your copy. Your copy will have no Waterdeep.*

Could you also cover more industrial bands like Massivivid, Echoing Green, My Rubicon 7, Painted Orange and (my personal favorite) Kaboing? I'm not the only person crazed over industri-

# 7ball letter of the month



Ouch. "If you're afraid of clowns or just hate them, this magazine is for you" [letters, issue 24]. Wrong! What a rude comment. I am into Christian music of all flavors, from Caedmon's Call to Supertones, and attend many concerts and festivals. And I am a professional Christian clown. I perform at gigs all over California. My ministry is kids. As I teach clown skills such as juggling, balloon sculpture and magic, I teach about Jesus and to serve Him by bringing laughter into peoples lives. So, if you hate clowns (are Christians supposed to hate anyone?) or are afraid, you just haven't met the right clown.  
Jingles The Clown  
Capitola, CA

al music, and I'm sure there's many others who'd appreciate it too. I have recently converted from Satanism and now I'm on fire for God!  
Benjamin J. Bahleda  
via the Internet

Thanks for the great mag. For some of us, Christ in music is what keeps us in tune with the One who keeps us going. I was an MK and now I am an M. I have taken Christian music all over the world, and I have one thing to say: Don't leave home without it! Keep writing about music that glorifies God and makes His soldiers fit for war.  
Jason Brooks  
via the Internet

It is great to finally have a mag that my non-Christian friends enjoy, too. I brought one of your amazing articles to school and it got passed around to so many people. Thanks for ministering to Christians as well as the unchurched—they need to hear, too.  
Sarah Joy Makus  
via the Internet

*We're also living la vida mocha.*

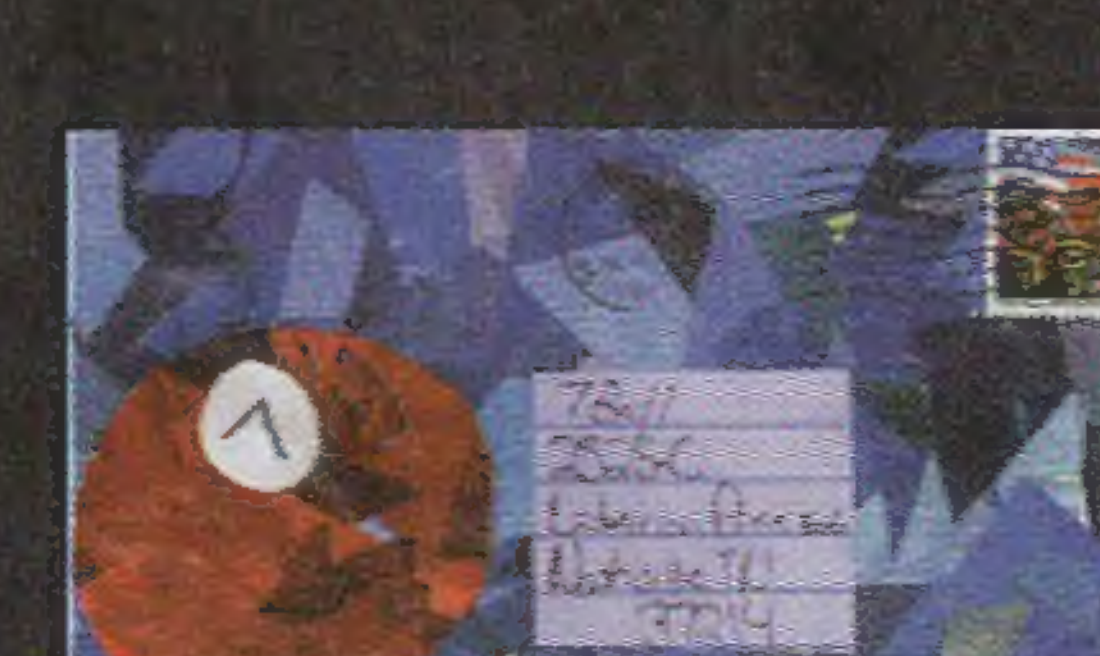
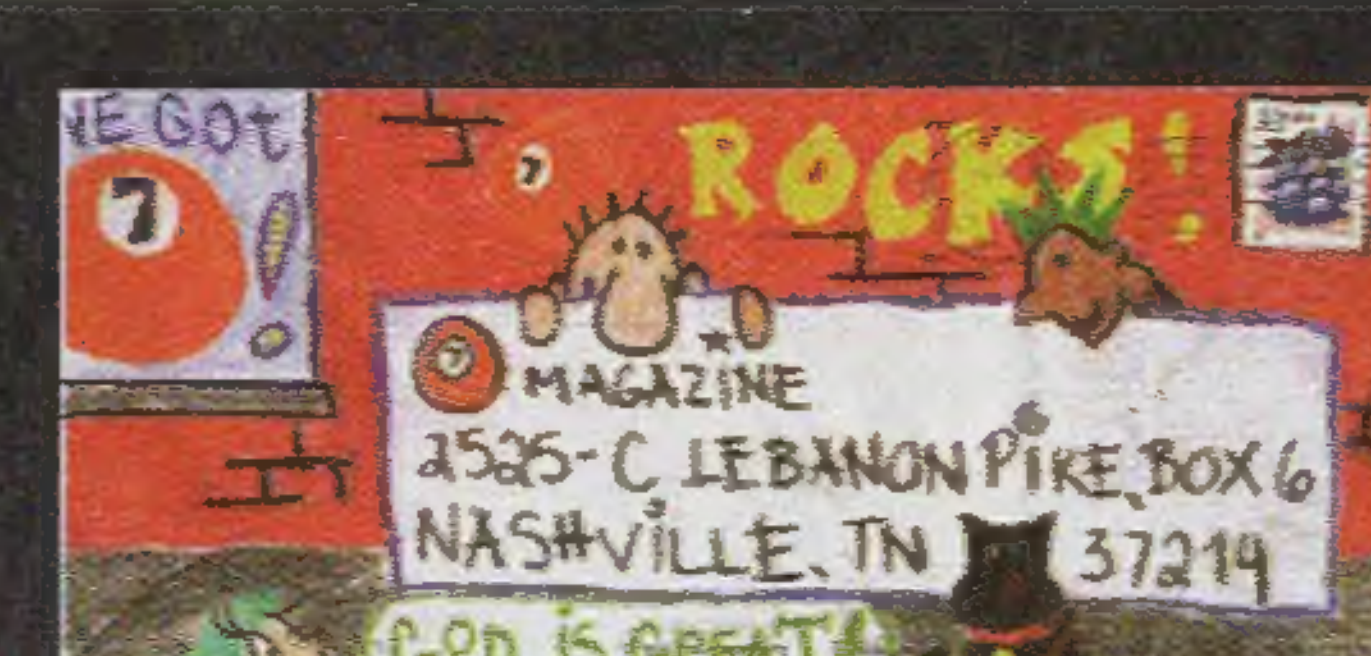
I was just wondering what kind of music the people at 7ball like the most?  
Abdel TyRon McPherson  
via the Internet

*37% modern rock; 13% emo; 11% hip-hop; 3% ska; 0% rockabilly; 36% Mylon LeFevre and Broken Heart.*

Every time I get the chance to pick up one of your mags I know that I'll be getting something worthwhile. Recently though, I came across something that was brought to my attention by an elderly friend of mine (gotta love yer elders!). He pointed out that we have gotten used to the catch word "Christ" and tend to leave out the word "Jesus." Words like "CrossSeeker" and "Christlike" are definitely awesome, but Jesus does have a rather musical ring to it, as well.  
Tobiah Seth Martin  
Sudbury, Ontario, Canada

The Joy Electric story was good. What Ronnie Martin said is true.  
Daniel Coughlin  
Durand, WI

*To us it was just crazy talk.*





What color is the 7ball? I've seen people draw it red. Others make it orange. The 7ball on the front cover looks both red and orange. I really can't tell. I haven't gone over to a pool hall and asked, "Does anyone know if the 7ball is red or orange?" But they probably couldn't tell me. They would all stop what they were doing and look at me with puzzled expressions on their faces.

Amy Smith  
Vacaville, CA

*When you go to the pool hall, call one of the guys "Clyde" by accident. Every time you visit over the next few weeks, keep calling him "Clyde." If he finally protests, say, "I'm sorry. I won't do that anymore, Murray."*

Has it ever occurred to anyone on staff over there that all of your "LovingHateMail" is about the "LovingHateMail" section of the mag? That is, it's a kind of meta-fanmail about nothing but itself. How many letters do you need to post that say either: *Your sarcastic responses to mail are so funny!* or *I really don't think Christ is shown through your harsh humor in the mail section?* Just curious. I thought y'all might clear a little space for some actual productive dialogue with your readers.

P.S. Not everyone has an embarrassing sour cream and chives story.

Jeremy Dowsett  
Lansing, MI

I am an adoring fan who absolutely loves your feedback page. It's interesting to see what others have to say. If I may, I'd like to contribute a suggestion: I see many "blooming artists" reveal their artistic talents on the very envelope they mail their fanmail letters in. You should pick out an artist's 7ball design and put it on the cover of your magazine. You could even pull off a contest for a 7ball cover.

Amanda Schwanke  
Hesston, KS

I enjoy the feedback most. I'm far from a teeny-bopper and can't crowd-surf (sink like a rock). I enjoy the humor and music reviews. Thanks for the CD that comes with the magazine.

Colleen  
Philadelphia, PA

Your comments are extremely annoying. Yes, extremely annoying—yet, extremely funny. I especially like the way you skirt around answering people's questions. Krista Pederson  
Tulsa, OK

*Based on your letter, we gather you're left-handed.*

I just wanted to thank you for your great articles on Chasing Furies and Sixpence None The Richer. I think it's cool there are bands out there who are reaching people who would never set foot in a church, but would listen to hope-filled music in a bar or on mainstream radio. Kristina Percival  
via the Internet

I find your mag extremely entertaining. The interviews are OK, but I like reading the letters and the little editorial responses.

Rachel Van Loon  
Waukesha, WI

Your magazine is great. You don't do any pointless interviewing; the attitude of the bands is shown through your articles and features. I haven't been listening to Christian music for very long, but because of 7ball I've discovered bands I would have never heard of.

Amanda Behrens  
Sheboygan, WI

In issue 24, you had a little article about Christian music festivals and you made me feel bad because you make it seem like you're not cool unless you go to festivals. I've never been to one and probably won't until I'm in college.

Leticia Ramirez  
Alvin, TX

You call yourselves a "Christian" magazine, but your responses to His children [in the letters] are no better, granted no worse, than that of a pagan magazine. When you accept the label, or title "Christian," you are calling yourselves literally "a little Christ" or "Christlike." Now, consider for a moment your words. Are they the kind of words that our Lord



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Pac, Ghoti Hook

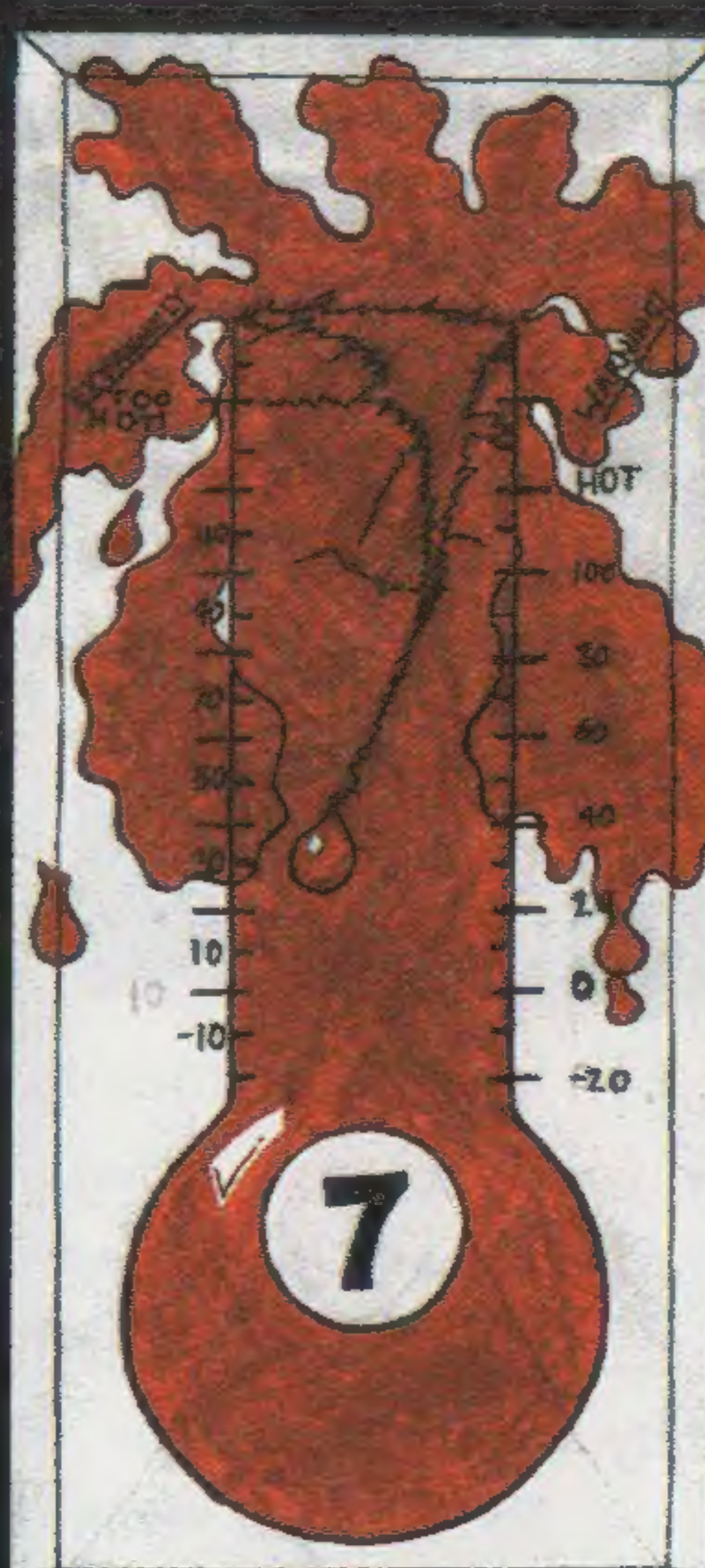
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Cowboys

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Insyderz, Bleach

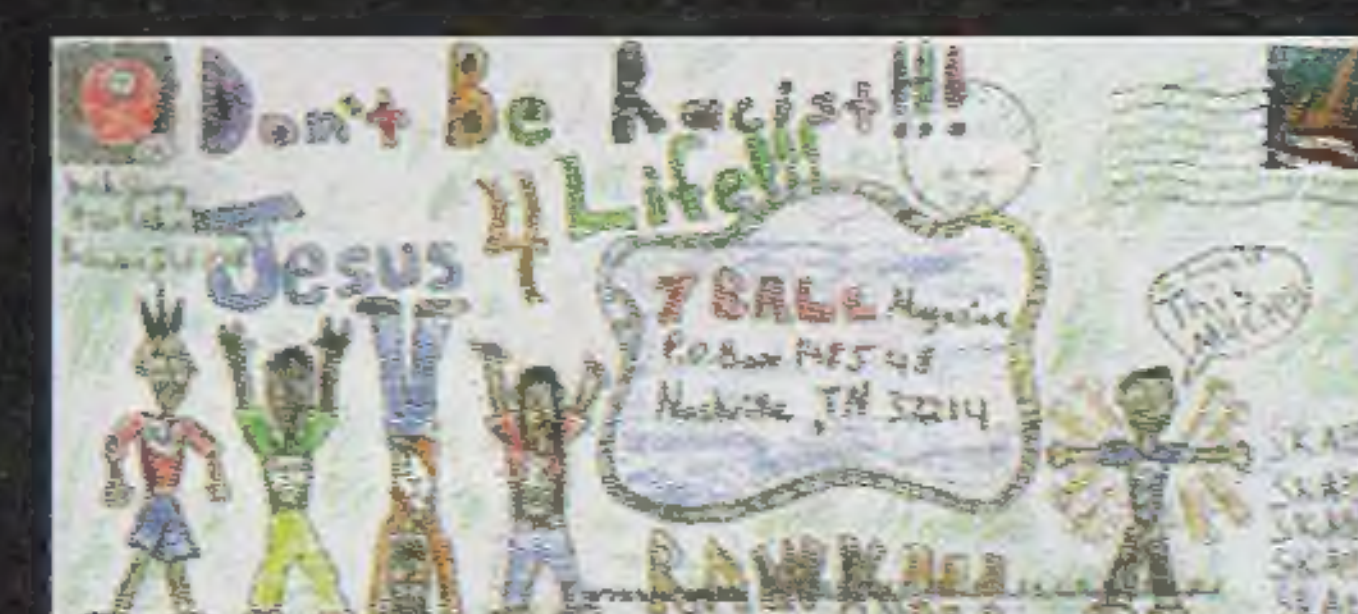
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Insyderz, Switchfoot

Alisha Smith  
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Fave Bands: dc Talk,  
Silage, Newsboys

Sarah Zajicek  
Female, 14  
2638 SW Cactus Circle  
Port St. Lucie, FL 34953  
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Silage, Ghoti Hook



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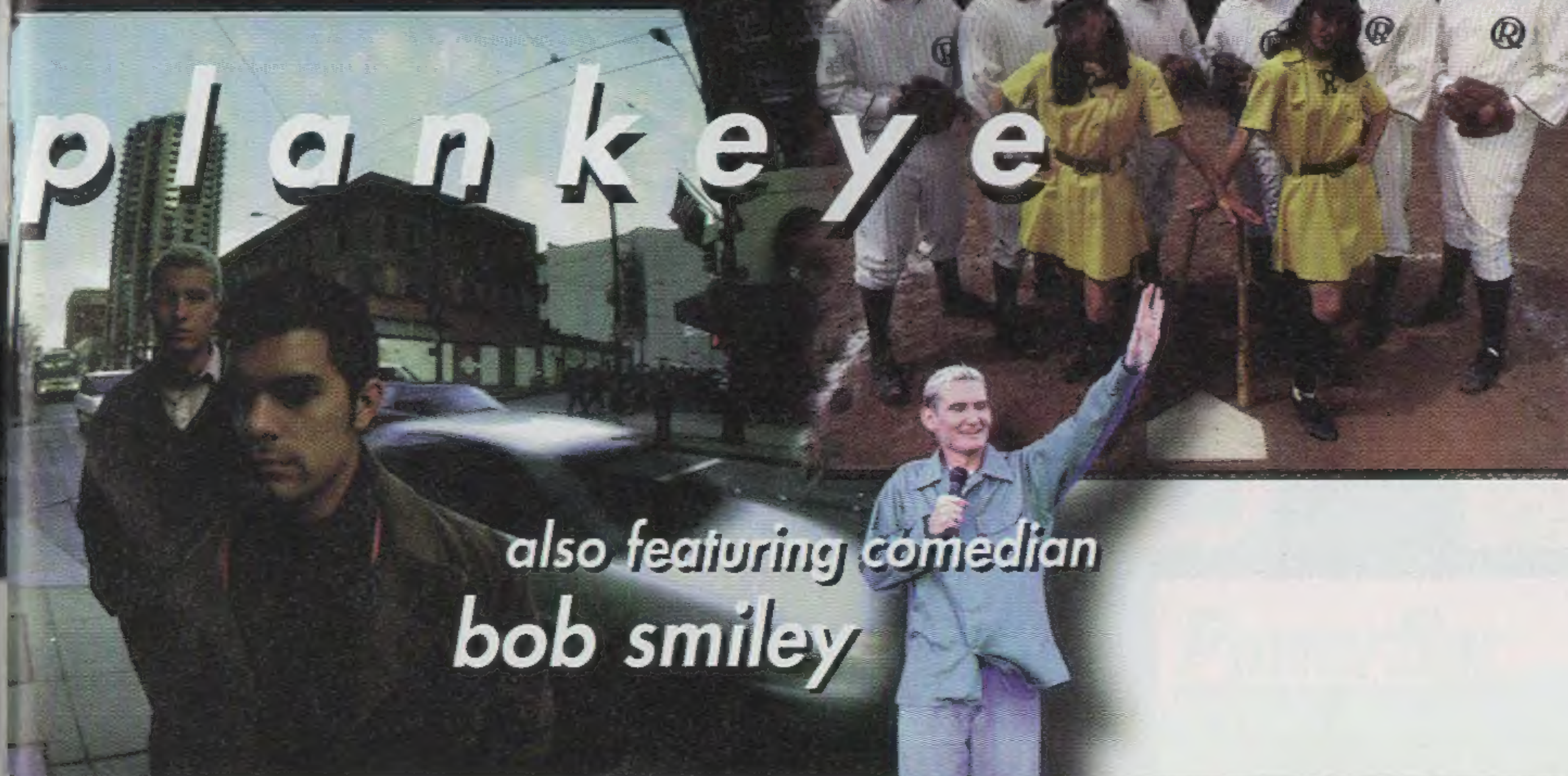


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- 2 Great America - Santa Clara, CA
- 4 Trinity Life Center - Las Vegas, NV
- 5 Tucson Convention Cntr. Arena - Tucson, AZ
- 6 Abraham Chavez Theater - El Paso, TX
- 7 Venue TBA - Abilene, TX
- 8 Humble Civic Arena - Humble, TX
- 9 New Church - Oklahoma City, OK
- 11 Memorial Hall - Kansas City, MO
- 12 Venue TBA - Omaha, NE
- 13 Frank's House of Rock - Des Moines, IA
- 14 TBA
- 15 Temple Baptist Church - Detroit, MI
- 16 Queensway Cathedral - Toronto, Canada
- 18 Lakeland Civic Center - Cleveland, OH
- 19 Phillippe Performing Arts Cntr - Marion, IN
- 20 Venue TBA - Louisville, KY
- 21 Veterans Memorial Auditorium - Columbus, OH
- 22 Hershey Arena - Hershey, PA
- 23 The Electric Factory - Philadelphia, PA
- 25 Carlton County Civic Center - Woodstock, New Brunswick CANADA
- 26 State Theater - Portland, ME
- 27 Klein Auditorium - Bridgeport, CT
- 28 Lehman Auditorium - Harrisonburg, VA
- 29 Hylton Chapel - Woodbridge, VA
- 30 Fairhaven Church - Dayton, OH

#### NOVEMBER

- 4 Byne Memorial Baptist Church - Albany, GA
- 5 Mt. Carmel Church - Atlanta, GA
- 6 Carpenter's Home Church - Lakeland, FL
- 8 First Baptist Church - Tallahassee, FL
- 9 Greensboro Coliseum War Memorial Auditorium - Greensboro, NC
- 11 Virginia Theater - Champaign, IL
- 12 Grand Valley University - Grand Rapids, MI
- 13 Wheaton College - Wheaton, IL
- 15 Faith Assembly - Casper, WY
- 16 City Auditorium - Colorado Springs, CO
- 18 Venue TBA - Spokane, WA
- 19 Pacific Lutheran University - Tacoma, WA
- 20 Chiles Center - Portland, OR



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would speak?  
Heather Cooper  
Mead, WA

Please print a picture of the magazine's staff because trying to picture them isn't working out.  
Roxanne Burson  
Longview, TX

*Are you the one who's been sending all those "secret admirer" emails?*

Ballydowse! You need to do a cover of this rad band from Chicago. They are the best show I have been to in a grip.  
Keith Stryker  
Chicago, IL

Do something on Starflyer 59. Now.  
Jake Sinclair  
via the Internet

*You people are getting pushy.*

I've always loved 7ball until I read a column in issue 24 and got kinda disgusted. There's this atrocious review of the *T&N Files* video. The reviewer totally killed the between-video segments, which is basically the reason all my friends and I buy the Tooth & Nail videos. We could see all those videos on any given day, but we never get to see the awesome shenanigans the staff gets into. They're the best part of the whole thing.  
Keith Clark  
via the Internet

Issue 24 looks great! It's nice to see the growth of a great magazine that refuses to stagnate, but strives to improve itself. Looking forward to your next issue, too.  
Chris Estey  
Seattle, WA

To all the people who ask stupid questions like "Can you ...", we need to ask important questions like, "What, really, are sea monkeys?"  
Ben Newman  
Charlotte, NC

*Never mention sea monkeys again.*

#### HOW TO WRITE US:

Email us at 7ball@7ball.com, or mail to 7ball Letters, 3670 Central Pike, Suite J, Hermitage, TN 37076. When emailing, please include your name and try to capitalize and punctuate like a normal person. Letters may be edited for space, clarity and various oddities (we don't want any-one outshining us). Oh, and don't ask us about subscriptions or back issues—send those questions to subscriptions@7ball.com.

#### CORRECTION:

In our *Liner Notes* last issue, we misidentified the songwriter for the *Sundry* track, "Enough's Enough." The song was written and copyrighted by *Sundry*.



7BALL MAGAZINE  
SEPTEMBER/AUGUST 1999  
NUMBER 26

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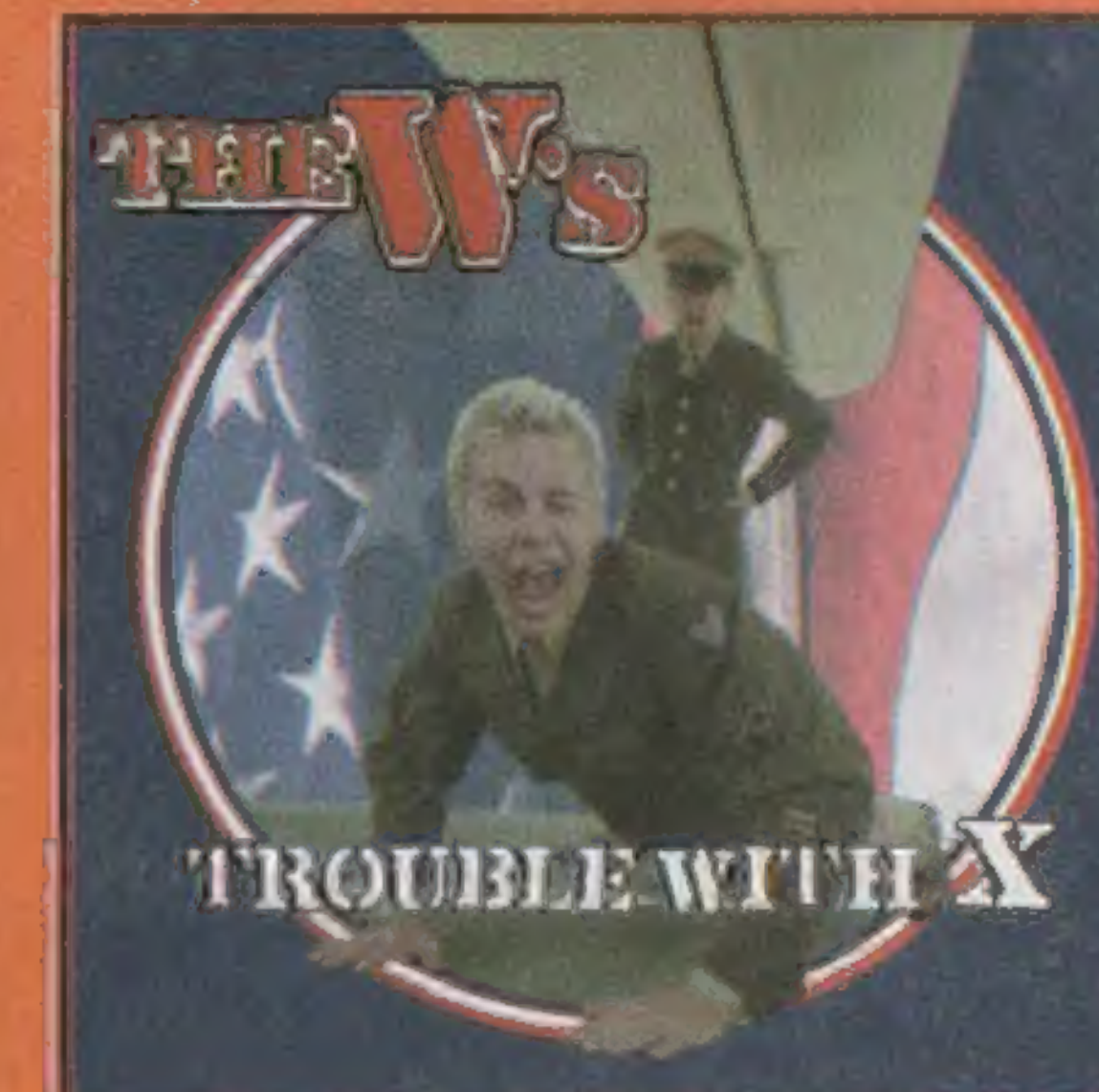
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\* The Insyderz not at these shows  
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MORE DATES WILL BE ADDED!!



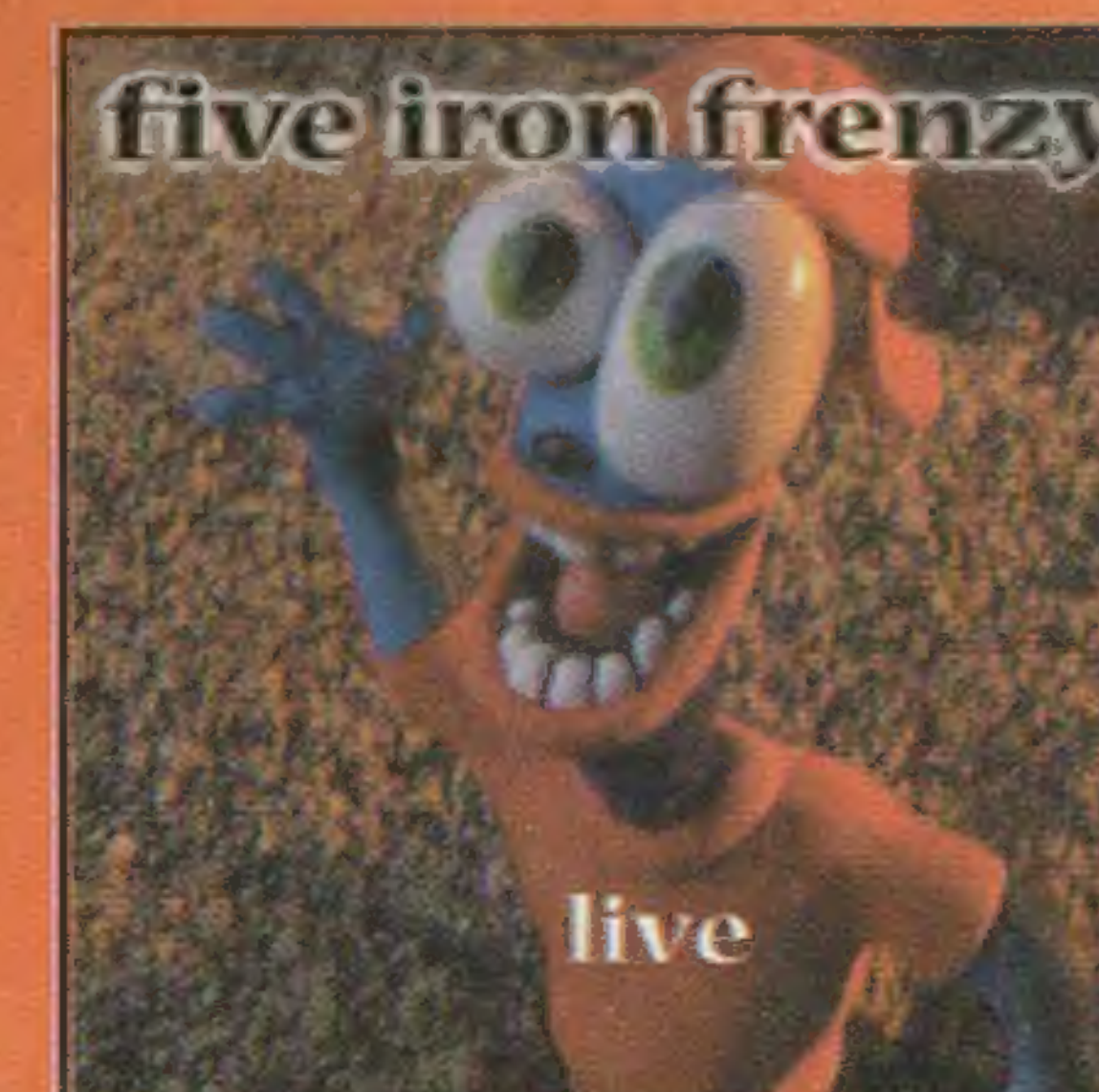
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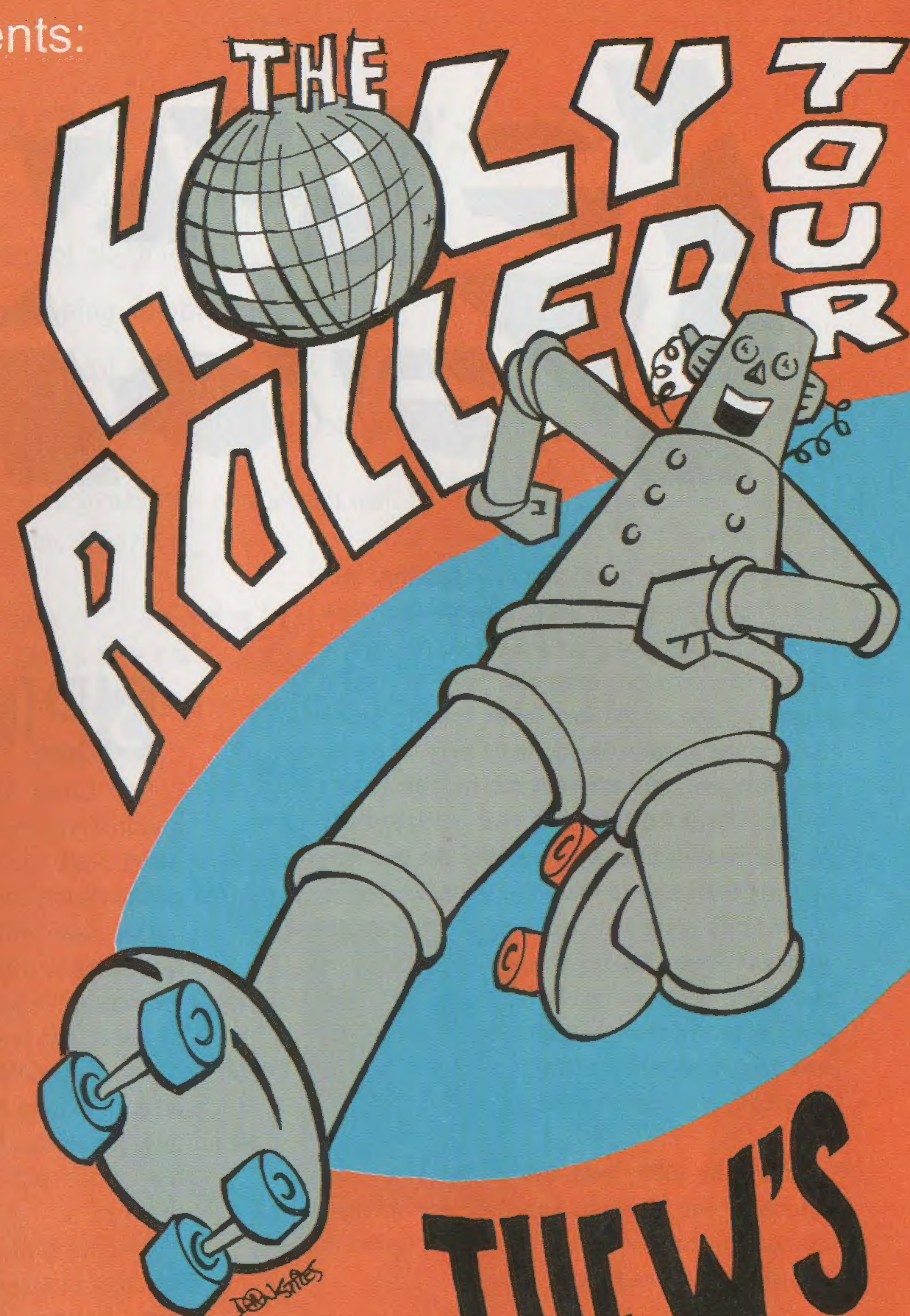
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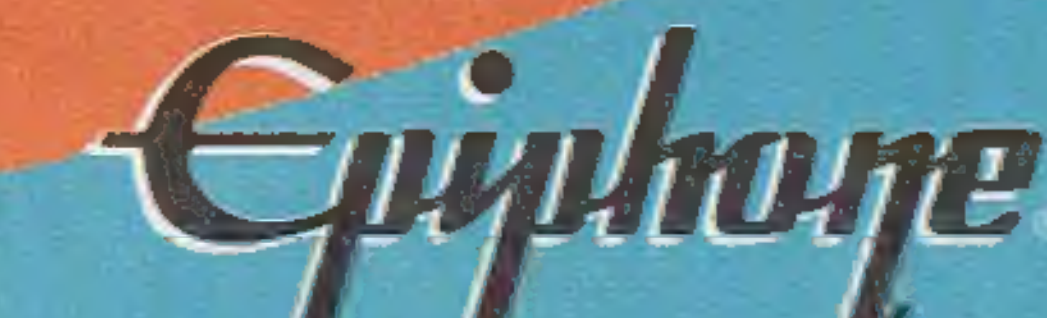
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You've Read The Best,

Now Read Yet Another  
Source of Information

**Sixpence None the Richer** launched their second single, "There She Goes," on *The Late Show With David Letterman* July 6. A staple in the band's live set since early '98, they recorded a studio version of the song after stations began playing the band's acoustic radio-only CD of the song last year. **Letterman** surprised **Leigh** by inviting her over to the guest chair for the final minutes of the show; she was nervous, but was able to share the C.S. Lewis analogy of God's grace that led to the band's name. Although "There She Goes" was not originally on the band's Gold-certified self-titled album, since April all pressings of the album have included the new version of the song. (For those counting, this is actually the **THIRD** version of this album.)

**MusicBiz 2005**, held October 15-17 in San Francisco, will highlight panelists and speakers discussing what the music industry will be like in five years. [www.mb-5.com](http://www.mb-5.com).

The new label **inpop** (International Pop), owned and operated by Newsboys' lead singer **Peter Furler**, manager Wes Campbell and Australian record executive Dale Bray, will focus on filling a need in the Christian market for international music, along with signing artists discovered in the U.S. The label's first signing, the Aussie rapcore group **Beanbag**, debuts in October.

Congratulations to re:think artist **Sarah Masen** and husband David Dark, on the birth of their first baby. Dorothy Day Dark was born on June 26, weighing in at a petite 6 lb. 3 oz. The healthy girl was named after Christian social activist Dorothy Day.

**Blame Lucy** was honored August 8 during this year's Ohio State Fair by the Ohio Christian Music Association. Dubbed the "Up And Coming Band Of The Year," Lucy was presented the award by the governor of Ohio.

The praise & worship revolution continues, with three new bands: **Among Thorns**, **The**

## SPOTLIGHT

Ska bands may be a dime a dozen these days, but Matt Malpass, guitarist/vocalist of the **Skadaddles**, makes it clear his band isn't an imitator. "I didn't start the Skadaddles to go into the Christian ska trend. The Supertones album hadn't come out when we started."

One clear difference is that the eight-piece band from Augusta, Ga., has two lead singers, which diversifies the sound and broadens their appeal. Another difference is the joyful innocence of a group mostly unaffected by the hard knocks of the record business and the road—the oldest Skadaddles is only 20.

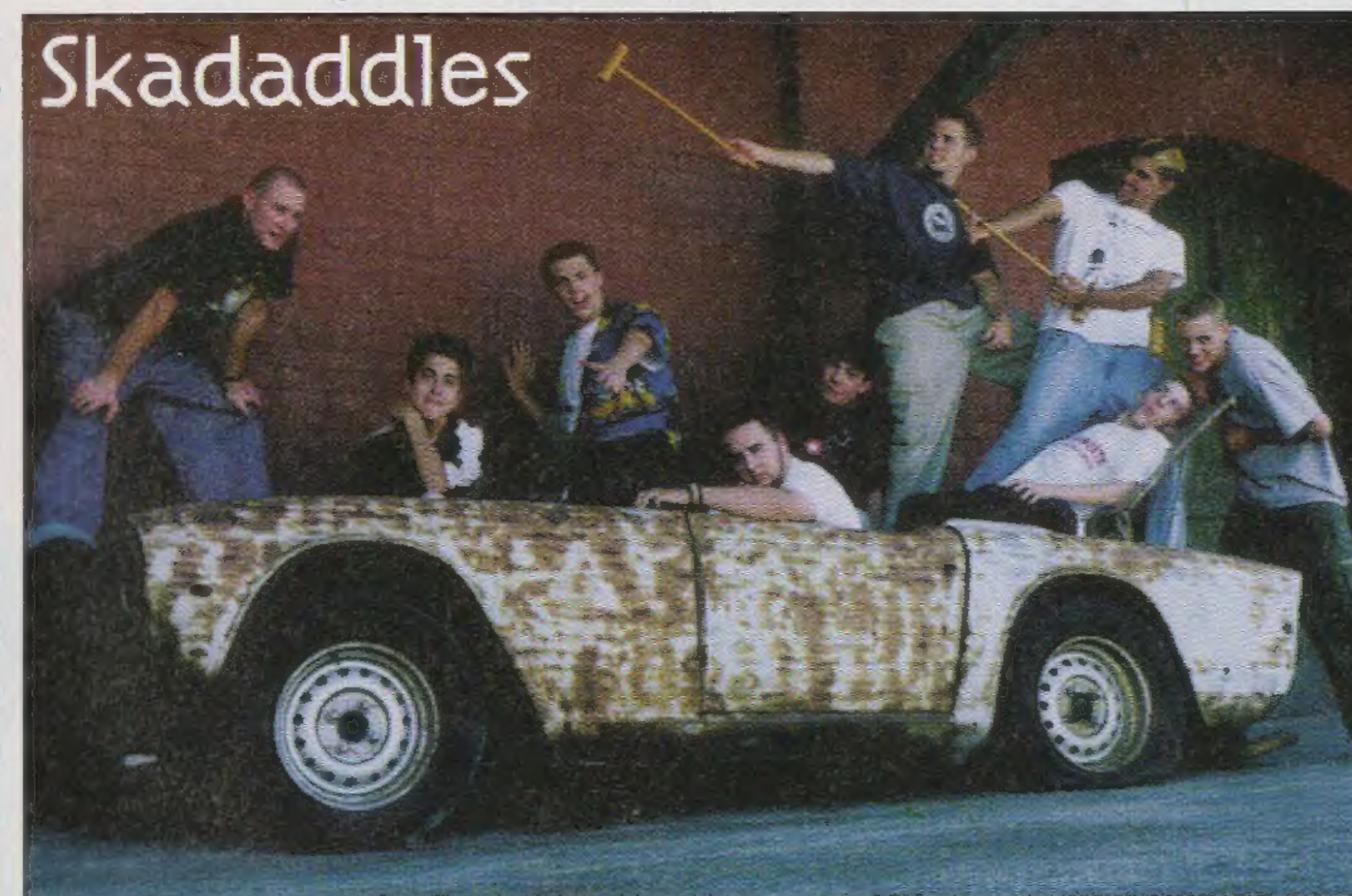
The Skadaddles race through 13 songs on their debut, *Scoop It Up*, punctuated with blaring horns and tocka-tocka guitars. And the lyrics—sometimes humorous, sometimes humble—don't pull any punches.

Favorite song topics are God and girls, but Malpass also touches on the bitterness of sin ("Lie")—the album even includes an instrumental ("SAV") and straight-up praise ("Worship You"). The fast tempos, typical of third-wave ska bands, accentuate the urgent messages. Sometimes the rhythms are a little funky, sometimes a little jazzy, but they're always danceable.

The band recently spent time working with AIM (Adventures In Missions) on a mission trip in Mexico, volunteering and leading praise & worship. The group's regular concerts, in fact, usually involve praise & worship and end with altar calls. "We get a lot of letters saying that the show changed people's lives," Malpass says. "That's definitely what we're about."

But the individual members are quick to credit their Master. "I don't think the Skadaddles are anything special," says trumpet player Chris Malpass. "The Lord brings whomever He wants to get influenced by what we say or do."

—Matt Simon



- 1 **TRAGEDY ANN**  
"Always" (Organic)  
2 **BROOMTREE**  
"Transparent" (Rustproof)  
3 **SWITCHFOOT**  
"New Way To Be Human" (Re:think)  
4 **THE INSYDERZ**  
"Jigsaw" (KMG)  
5 **CHEVELLE**  
"Mia" (Squint)  
6 **PETE STEWART**  
"Out Of My Mind" (ForeFront)  
7 **PLUMB**  
"Late Great Planet Earth" (Essential)  
8 **SUPERTONES**  
"Chase The Sun" (BEC)  
9 **BELIEVABLE PICNIC**  
"Rollercoaster" (Absolute)  
10 **MUKALA**  
"Stranger Than Fiction" (Essential)  
11 **FIVE IRON FRENZY**  
"One Girl Army" (5 Minute Walk)  
12 **JILL PARR**  
"In Your Eyes" (Absolute)  
13 **ALL STAR UNITED**  
"Welcome To Our Big Rock Show" (Essential)  
14 **SCARECROW & TINMEN**  
"Gospel Love" (Pamplin)  
15 **SKILLET**  
"Take" (ForeFront)  
16 **PLANKEYE**  
"Say Now That You're Sorry" (BEC)  
17 **MISS ANGIE**  
"Dancin' In My Head" (Myrrh)  
18 **SEVEN DAY JESUS**  
"I Will Find You" (ForeFront)  
19 **SATELLITE SOUL**  
"Great Big Universe" (ForeFront)  
20 **BETWEEN THIEVES**  
"Let Me See" (Tattoo)

Charts, courtesy of *Progressive Airplay Journal*, reflect national radio airplay. For information about PAJ, email [mail@purerock.net](mailto:mail@purerock.net) or find them on the Web at <http://purerock.net>.

## 7ball 1999 Reader's Poll

1. Favorite Christian record released since November '98:
2. Favorite Christian record of all time:
3. Favorite baked potato topping combination:
4. Secular band/artist you'd most like to witness to:
5. Number of times you heard "Kiss Me" before you got sick of it:

Send your answers to [readerspoll@7ball.com](mailto:readerspoll@7ball.com) or via snail mail to 7ball Reader's Poll, 3670 Central Pike, Suite J, Hermitage, TN 37076.

Questions we didn't bother asking because the answers are just too obvious:

1. Most important person in the history of Christian rock:  
(Steve Taylor)
2. *Star Wars* or *Star Trek*:  
(Diff'rent Strokes)
3. Number of Christian artists that are former members of Petra:  
(All of them)

Rod Laver

(not .rod laver)



Photo by Rachel L. Martin

## SPOTLIGHT

There are few true innovators in Christian music, but indie band **LoBo** is definitely on the front lines. The five-member group from North Carolina is making waves with a completely new style of music. Yes, new style.

LoBo—short for Lactose Biggot (because "intolerance is bigotry," says drummer Tim Ordie)—is on the frontwave of a new genre flooding the eastern seaboard. That genre, sono, uniquely blends the vastly different worlds of emo, country and ska. Though verbal description falls short of fully conveying the complexity and originality of this new sound, LoBo has it nailed. The band is playing consistently sold-out club dates and is causing a stir seldom seen in Christian music circles. "We can't believe the response this music is getting," Ordie says. "It's really overwhelming."

—Steve Olson

(For more information about LoBo, see Reviews on page 44.)

**Margrits and Thirsty Child.** Among Thorns is a fresh addition to Cross-Driven/Here To Him Music. For more than four years, the band has been playing before large youth gatherings with Baptist youth evangelist Ken Freeman, in addition to their own concerts. Their self-titled debut is a blend of acoustic rock, contemporary and alternative sounds. The Margrits is comprised of worship pioneers like Rich Ochoa, Chris Lizotte, Todd Warren, Rich Nibbe, Kevin Jarvis and Sandra Stephens. They've been in the studio working on the next addition to Maranatha! Music's alternative praise line. Thirsty Child's *Dying To Live* is one of the inaugural releases from Maranatha's new imprint Worship Underground. The Van, Texas, rock band is led by worship leader Mike Ash, and all the members are full-time missionaries with YWAM.

The **Plankeye** song "Someday" is featured on the *Milk Gravity Tour* CD along with bands like Dishwalla and Goldfinger. The CDs will be sold at Milk Gravity Tour Events, over the Internet, on milk containers, and national TV, radio and newspaper promotions. It is being sold in support of the California Milk Advisory Board, a non-profit organization that protects the liveli-



hood of 2,300 dairy families in California. 50 percent of the profits will be donated to this charity. Meanwhile, Plankeye's "Goodbye" will be featured on the new Pepsi promo CD, going out to 75,000 people, and featuring other artists such as Luscious Jackson, Ben Lee, Bis, and Jimmy Eat World.

As always, **Third Day** is playing *somewhere*—over the next three months, they're hitting the Midwest and the South. For up-to-date info, check out [www.third-day.com/tour.htm](http://www.third-day.com/tour.htm)

The suits at Screaming Giant Records knew that **Officer Negative's** Josh Handley was onto something when he dropped his demo on their desk and said, "Here." In his guise as Zippy Josh, the singer/songwriter steps out from the hard music of O.N. for Stupidville, a slice of "cow punk" akin to Michael Knott and Mike Ness. Handley's acoustic rock is finding favor with crowds both young and old; watch for him to tour with many of his labelmates this fall.



Fudge

## on the road

*The O.C. Supertones with Plankeye, All Star United, and One Eighty*

### OCTOBER

- 1 Victorville, CA (760) 244-0279
- 2 Santa Clara, CA (408) 369-8222
- 5 Tucson, AZ (520) 760-6232
- 8 Humble, TX (281) 446-5725
- 10 Kansas City, MO (630) 906-9633
- 15 Grand Rapids, MI (630) 906-9633
- 18 Cleveland, OH (330) 971-9008
- 20 Champaign, IL (630) 906-9633
- 21 Columbus, OH (937) 642-7912
- 22 Hershey, PA (717) 392-3206
- 23 Philadelphia, PA (609) 654-8440
- 25 New Brunswick, Canada (506) 325-2537
- 26 Portland, ME (978) 346-4577
- 27 Bridgeport, CT (203) 255-3401
- 30 Dayton, OH (317) 839-1092

### NOVEMBER

- 2 Fayetteville, NC (252) 451-1200
- 5 Atlanta, GA (630) 906-9633
- 6 Lakeland, FL (941) 859-1477
- 11 Anderson, IN (317) 839-1092
- 12 Wheaton, IL (630) 906-9633
- 13 Minneapolis, MN (630) 906-9633
- 16 Colorado Springs, CO (303) 941-3274
- 18 Spokane, WA (630) 906-9633
- 19 Tacoma, WA (630) 906-9633
- 20 Portland, OR (630) 906-9633

### DECEMBER

- 31 La Mirada, CA (805) 736-6415

[www.becrecordings.com/tours.htm](http://www.becrecordings.com/tours.htm)



## The Big Wooden Indian Head answers your questions

Q: Dear BWIH:

Some of these Christian rock bands are doing songs just about life and stuff. How is that different from listening to secular music? Should I listen to it?

—Concerned, Providence, RI

A: Dear Concerned:

You're right, a lot of Christian artists are making songs nowadays that aren't directly about God. Does that make them bad? Not necessarily. God can show Himself in all aspects of our lives, even things that aren't typically labeled "Christian." But whether or not it's OK for you to listen to that music is between you, your spiritual authority (your parents if you're still at home) and God.

Q: Dear BWIH:

How old do you think I should be before I start dating?

—Lonely, Providence, RI

A: Dear Lonely:

That answer is different for each individual and is largely based on things like emotional and spiritual maturity. Your parents know you best; ask them. Or find some other kind of authority (like a pastor)—someone who is older than you and can give you wise counsel. Dating is not something you want to mess around with before it's the right time.

Q: Dear BWIH:

I always wear a pocket square with my suit jacket. My squares are silk, in solid colors that match my tie or shirt. Usually I tuck them loosely in my breast pocket with the corners down and the fabric from the center exposed. If I wear a linen square, I usually iron it into points. Am I correct, or is there a better way?

—Obsessive, Providence, RI

A: Dear Obsessive:

You need to dress casually more often.

Send the Big Wooden Indian Head your questions at [thehead@7ball.com](mailto:thehead@7ball.com) or by mailing Big Wooden Indian Head, 3670 Central Pike, Suite J, Hermitage, TN 37076.

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Tha G Filez

These veterans of Christian rap founded God's Original Gangstaz. This classic collection contains select hits from three of their top-selling Grapetree albums. This hot album completes the series of GOG's greatest work.



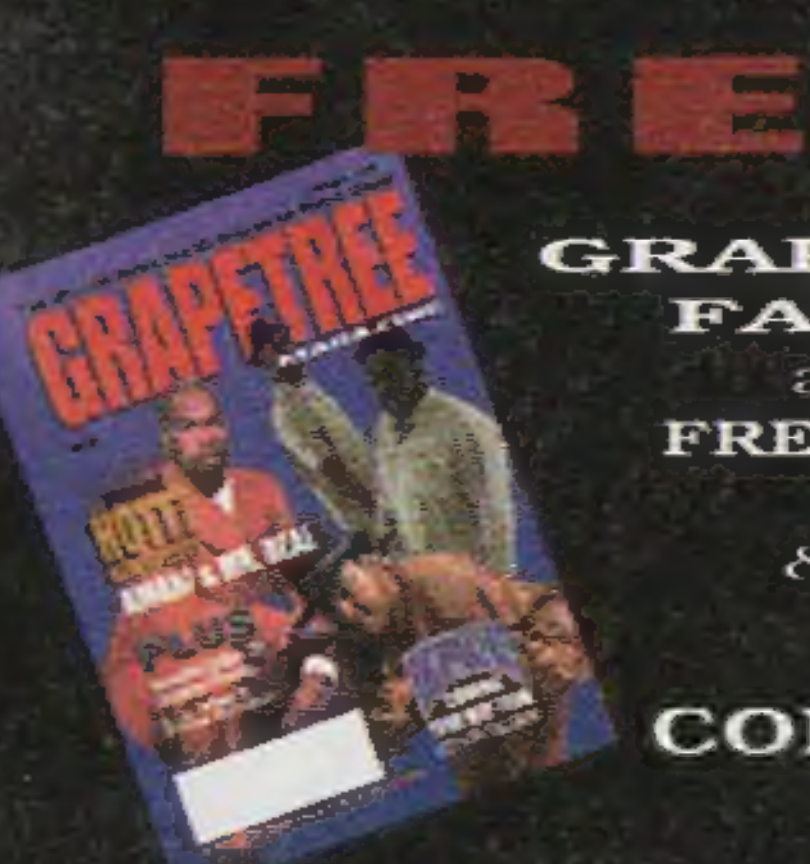
**Lil' Raskull**  
Certified Southern Hits

One of Grapetree's top artists explodes onto the hip-hop scene with this incredible album. From the best of Lil' Raskull's southern flow comes Certified Southern Hits. This unbelievable album shows the world the unique skills of the "South's #1 Little Man."



**Bruthaz Grimm**  
Letter 2 Tha Bruthaz

Warring with Satan, these soldiers capture audiences with their lyrical flow. Bruthaz Grimm grasp the attention of listeners and shine the truth of Jesus's salvation into their eyes in this their second album.



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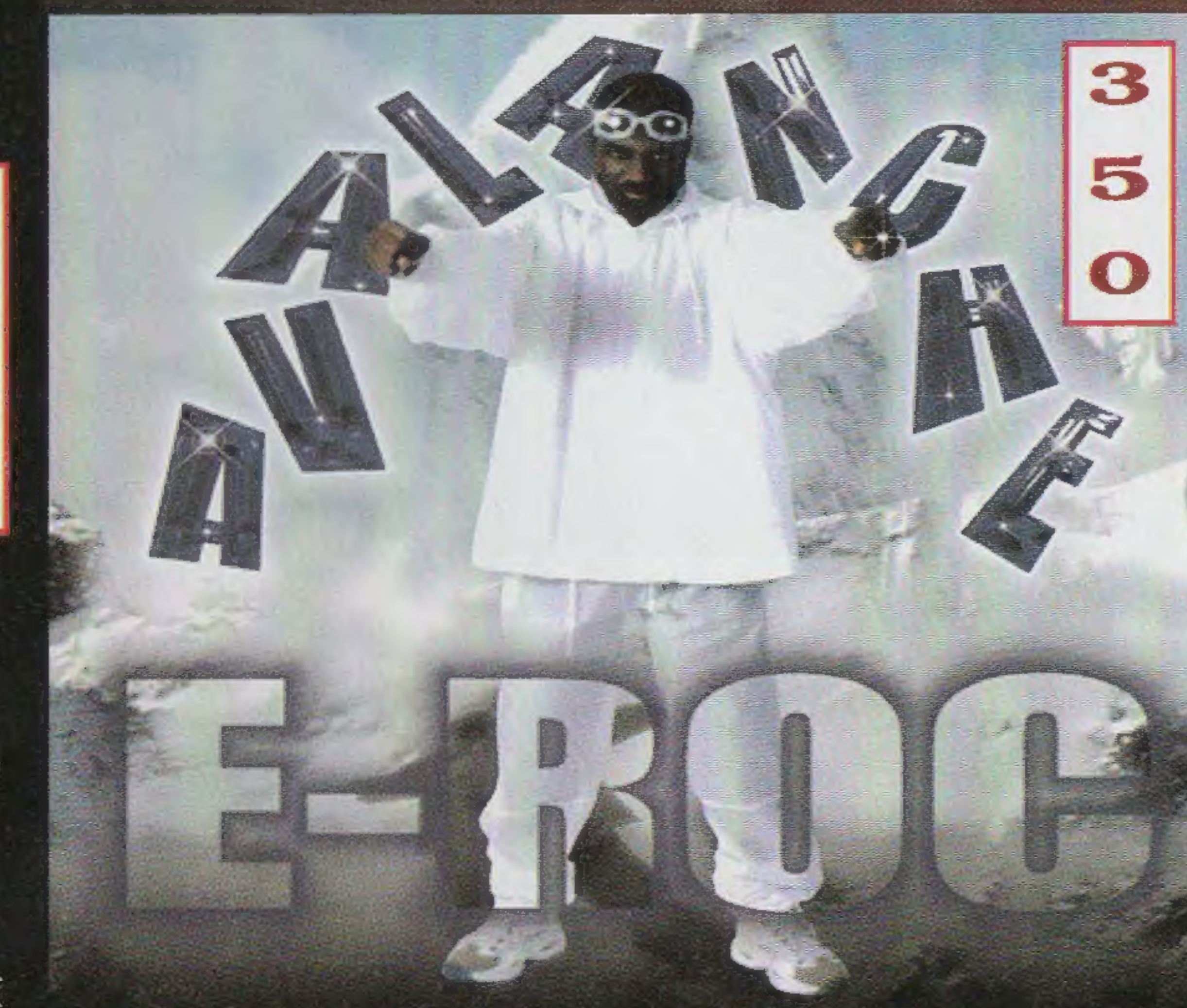
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Volume IV

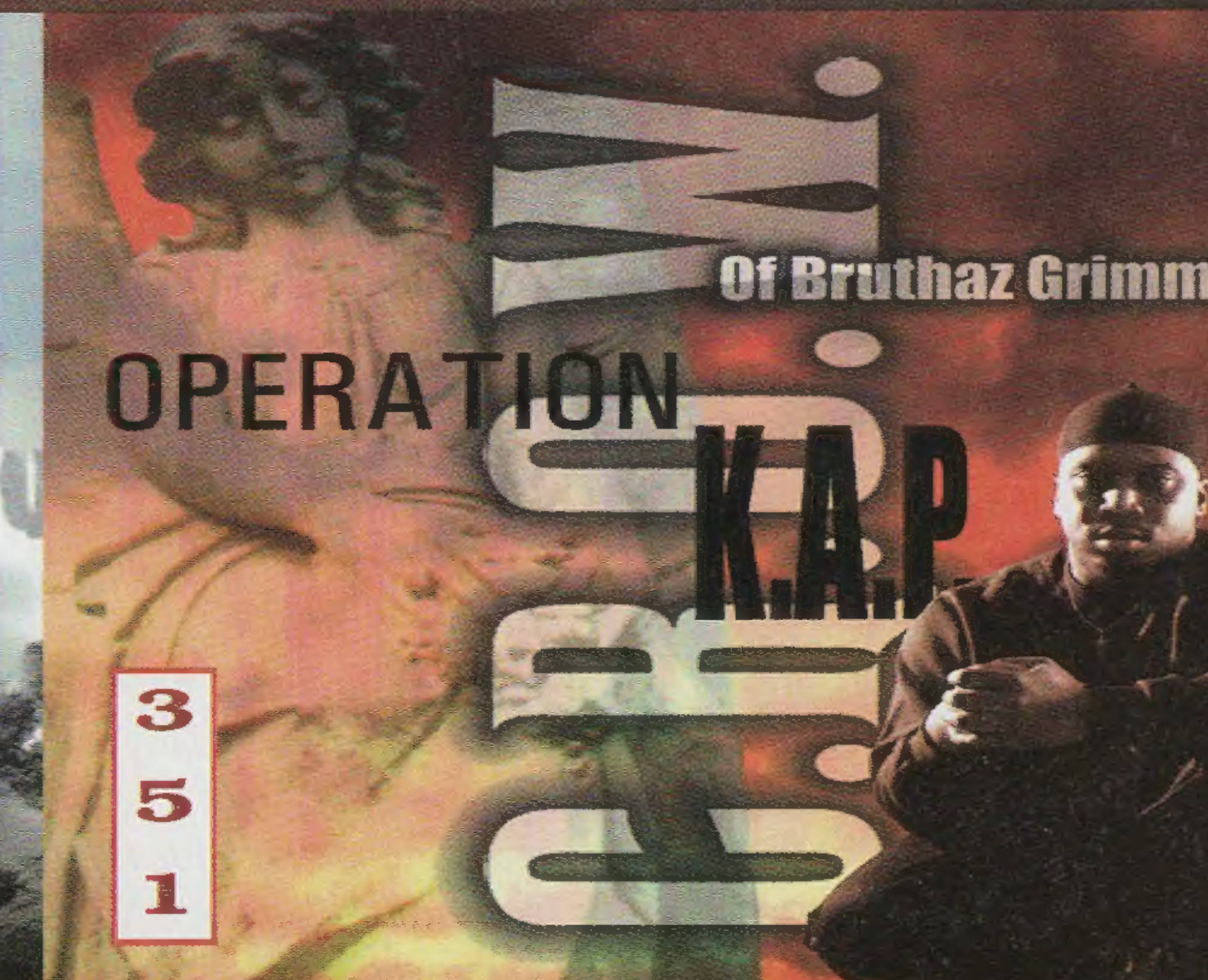
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**WORLD'S #1 CHRISTIAN RAP LABEL!!!**





Gotee Records and Lauryn Hill's Refugee Project are partnering with Project Truth, a non-profit corporation specifically designed to equip 12-19-year-old severely at-risk adolescents and teens to grow beyond their low-income inner-city neighborhoods.

Young people will be divided into groups and asked to create mock record labels; mainstream industry executives, marketing directors and artists will lend their expertise to everything from recording, producing and studying contracts to directing music videos. Each "record label" must walk through the signing of the band, the record contract, the songwriting, the recording and A&R, as well as the marketing and promotions for their band.

Two artists helping out are Knowdaverbs and Out of Eden. Knowdaverbs will facilitate the process of songwriting and talk to the kids about hip-hop influences and the artistic process of recording. Out of Eden will also address songwriting as well as offering an artist perspective of marketing.

This year's event is being built around a line from Lauryn Hill's song "Everything is Everything," *This is where hip-hop meets Scripture*. Each label's goal is find a truth in the Bible that relates with them today.

*Raize Da Praize* is the new album from the eight-member urban ensemble Tribe of Benjamin. The Integrity Music project features urban-influenced praise, produced by Ben Tankard.

No sooner do the members of Unity Klan return with their Eternal Funk debut, *One Day*, furthering their brand of hip-hop praise & worship, than there's already talk of solo records. (Since they started their own record label, I guess they can do that.) Big Jay, Danny and Jaz are currently working on their solo projects, due in the year 2000. They're also looking for new artists for a compilation: If you've got a demo, email [eternalfunk@eternalfunk.com](mailto:eternalfunk@eternalfunk.com) or go the Web at [www.eternalfunk.com](http://www.eternalfunk.com).

More turbo-charged praise & worship is coming your way, courtesy of *Nitro Praise 7: Cherish The Soul* (N•Soul). Listen to hyper remakes of such classics as "It Is Well With My Soul" and "Great Is The Lord," then take the lead with the complete instrumental/performance tracks that are on the same disc.

SHORT TAKES: Devaness Records just released two new projects: *Survival*, the sophomore CD from God Quest, and the R&B/rap style of new artist T.J. on *Life Styles ... Shabach Entertainment*, home of R&B artist Febe, will release the new CD by Pettidee in November ... The Cross Movement website now has an interview from Philadelphia's hot secular radio station, 103.9 FM; check it out at [www.crossmovement.com](http://www.crossmovement.com) ... The Kenoly Brothers, sons of worship artist Ron Kenoly, debut with *All The Way* (Against The Flow); they combine lyrics that uplift and encourage Christians with a smooth R&B sound for fans of Blackstreet and Winans Phase 2.

# Rhythmic Chart

- 1 GRITS  
"They All Fall Down" (Gotee)
- 2 GOSPEL GANGSTAZ  
"I Can See Clearly Now" (B-Rite)
- 3 CODE OF ETHICS  
"Hallelujah 2000" (Word)
- 4 K2S  
"How Deep Is Your Love" (Metro One)
- 5 RAZE  
"Always And Forever" (ForeFront)
- 6 KNOWDAVERBS  
"Equeena" (Gotee)
- 7 JILL PARR  
"In Your Eyes" (Absolute)
- 8 THE CROSS MOVEMENT  
"House Of Representatives" (Cross Movement)
- 9 RAZE  
"I Need Your Love" (ForeFront)
- 10 MINDS OF MEN  
"Promised Land" (ForeFront)

Charts, courtesy of *Progressive Airplay Journal*, reflect national radio airplay. For information about PAJ, email [mail@purerock.net](mailto:mail@purerock.net) or find them on the Web at <http://purerock.net>.

## SPOTLIGHT

Hip-hop has always been competitive, but Ken "K-Buc" Henderson, Donald "D-Smooth" Newman, and sister Jennifer Newman have creative hearts that ignore limits and expectations set by others. While some bands avoid peer comparison by trying really hard to be different, K2S just is.

Their unique sound and musical philosophy is linked to the difference between Christian and secular hip-hop. Despite the enduring influence of mainstream rap, Christian rap's popularity has declined over time. "It makes us want to be more creative and musically more in-depth," says Ken. "We want to create not only lyrics that make you think and pierce the heart but music that makes you groove."

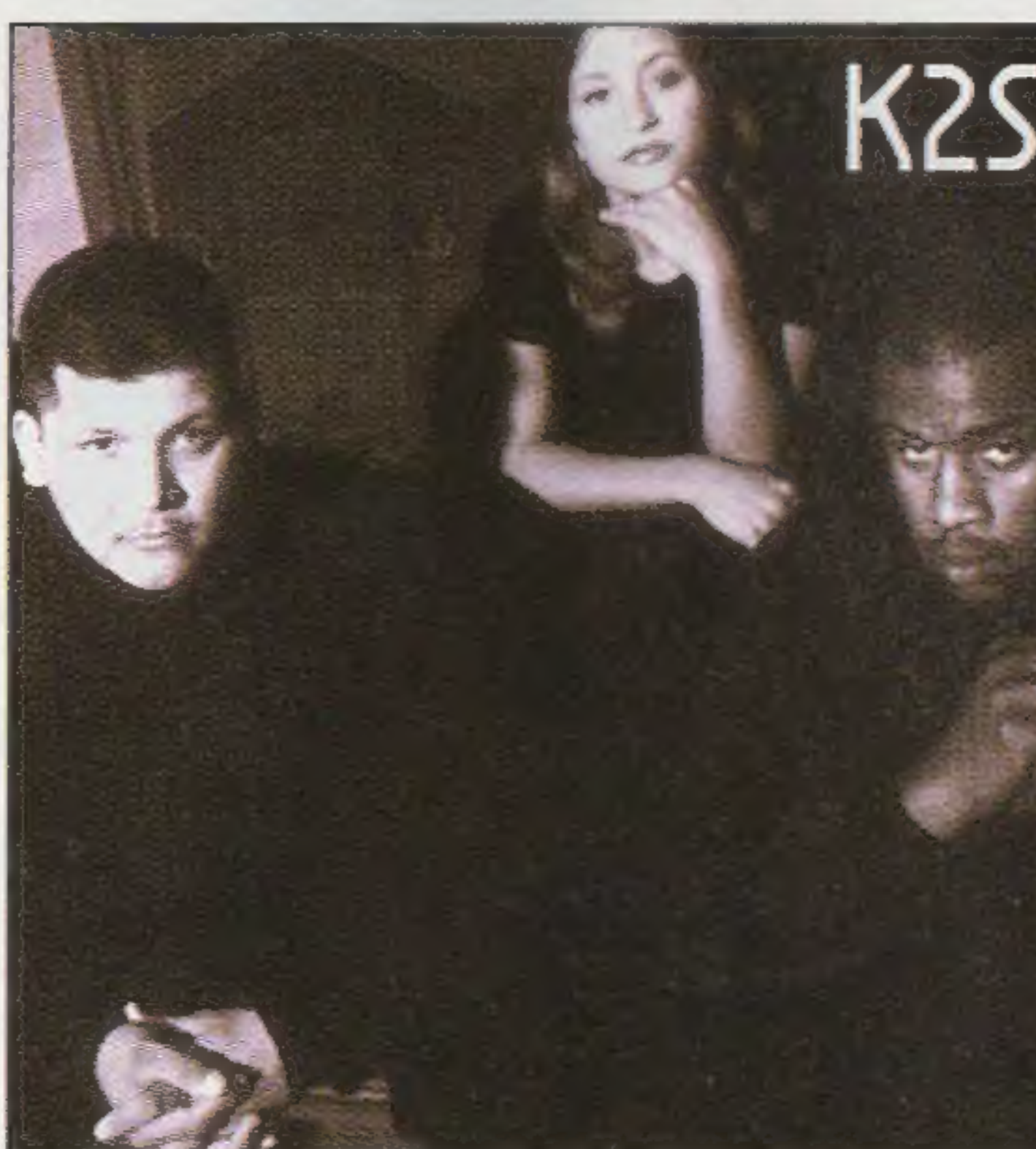
Although secular hip-hop is traditionally plagued by rivalry, Ken says the common bond of Christ keeps the Christian scene friendly. The only tension is between purists and those who incorporate other styles with rap. "It can easily go into jealousy, dissing and looking down on what another artist is doing," he says. "As long as someone is representing Jesus out of a pure motive and a pure heart, I'm gonna support them even if I don't particularly like their style."

Their latest album, *Better Dayz*, finds K2S expanding their own brand of hip-hop. They get some fine help from producer Dan Garcia, keyboardist James Raymond (son of David Crosby), Crystal Lewis (for a cover of the Bee-Gees' "How Deep Is Your Love") and former tour-mates the Insyderz. "We're really proud of this album," Don says. "It's a wide variety of music; we give something to everybody. Everyone was expecting a good follow-up album and I think we put that right in their hands."

K2S has been on the road again with the Insyderz for the *Fight of My Life Festival Tour*, along with the Deluxtone Rockets, Miss Angie and the Dingees. There is also talk of a future all hip-hop tour.

"We've gotten a really, really good response all the way around," Don says. "The Apostle Paul says to be *all things to all men*. We try to be diverse. We like different styles of music and try to be ourselves. We're just two local guys who know how to flow, that love Jesus and wanna let everybody know about him."

—Jay Sprout



## on the road on road The Cross Movement

### SEPTEMBER

3 Philadelphia, PA "Impacting Your World"  
25 St. Davids, PA Eastern College

### OCTOBER

8-9 Portland, OR "Hoodstock—Urban Youth Generation Conference" New Song Community Church (503) 493-1303  
15 North Philly, PA Hissy Park

### NOVEMBER

13 Bronx, NY Salem Coffee House  
27 Phoenix, AZ

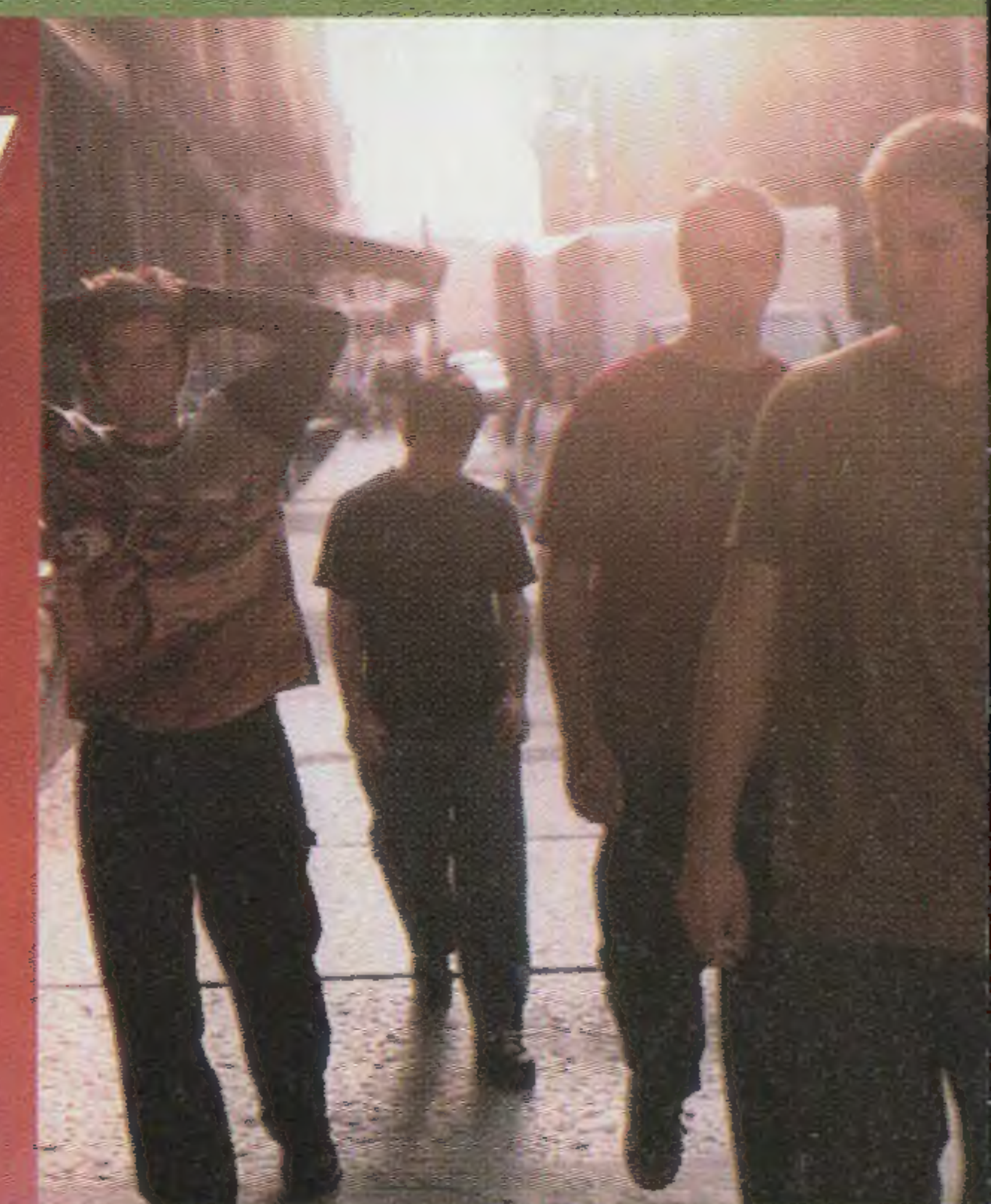
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# Loud

**Chevelle** was one of two Christian artists (along with **Gospel Gangstaz**) on MTV's *Under The Radar*, which featured videos from 20 of the newest and brightest up-and-comers. Chevelle's video, "Mia," is one of the most bizarre yet deeply spiritual clips we've seen in a loooooong time. (Loooooong.) (Time.)

We hear good things about **Gryp**, who just debuted on **Metro Vox** with *Indecision*. Curtis Shamlin's voice runs the gamut from rap to a sweet rasp to an all-out frontal assault, while the band provides an eerie but tight back-drop. For fans of Limp Bizkit and Korn, but with lyrics that point to Jesus as the answer to all of life's hardest questions. [www.gryp.net](http://www.gryp.net)

Bettie Rocket's **Anguish Unsaid** will pierce you with a brutal fury that screams with angst. On *Wanting...Waiting*, the guitars thrash and crunch, the rhythms are insane and syncopated, and the vocals are spirit-filled. Yet, Anguish Unsaid proves to be not only a prolific hardcore band but also Christ-centered and full of emotion. Their message is one of hope, truth, and sincerity.

**Jesse & the Rockers** will have a new record on shelves in October. *Madison Rd.* is driven by many of the experiences they had while on the

road, and the relationship with Christ that grew from those experiences. Expect the Rockers to back the record up with yet more touring.

If you miss the glory days of '80s melodic metal (hey, *somebody* out there is buying that new Def Leppard album!), you'll be glad to know **Ken Tamplin** and **Shout** have an all-new record on the way. "Some of the old band members contacted me with the idea and I said why not," Tamplin says. A new, full-length Shout reunion comes out in September on **Z Records**. Get the details at [www.kentamplin.com](http://www.kentamplin.com). And for that trip down memory lane, don't forget the Shout "best of" package from KMG, also sporting a couple new tracks.

Fresh out of the box is the debut from **Seventh Vision**, *Shock of the Hour*, on **Screaming Giant**. The four-piece from South Carolina, discovered by Tedd Cookerly of Every Day Life, is out to prove they can hold their own in rap-core. Seventh Vision plans to tour heavily for the rest of the year.



He Wants to Help

## SPOTLIGHT

Last year at the German rock fest Owen-Tek Rocknacht, a new band from Nashville burst onto the European heavy metal scene. After performing all their songs and two encores, they bowed out of a third promising to return not only with more songs, but also speaking German. "We did have a translator," says lead singer Bob Gross, "but it was still quite a barrier. I'll probably be singing most of the [songs] in German when we go back."

**Stir**'s debut, *Broken Tongues*, has found widespread acceptance in secular circles, especially in Europe and Central America. "They don't separate secular from Christian there," Gross says, "so you can get in more places and play in front of people that wouldn't necessarily come see you or buy your record if you were labeled as a Christian band. We feel a sense of urgency to let people know the goodness of God."

This past summer Stir played several secular festivals including the classic rock fest Itchycoo Park '99 in Manchester, Tenn. (where they were one of only two Christian groups); FLEVO '99 in Holland and their second Owen-Tek Rocknacht in Germany. They plan to return to the studio early next year to begin a new record mixed by Michael Wagener (platinum producer/engineer for Skid Row, Motley Crue, Stryper, and Metallica).

—Rachel L. Martin



- 1 P.O.D.  
"Southtown" (Tooth & Nail)
- 2 SPOKEN  
"People Get Ready" (Metro Vox)
- 3 STRETCH ARMSTRONG  
"When Sorrow Falls" (Solid State)
- 4 NAILED  
"Bleed Me" (Rugged)
- 5 .ROD LAVER  
"Song 10" (Screaming Giant)
- 6 NO INNOCENT VICTIM  
"Flesh And Blood" (Victory)
- 7 THE WAY SECT BLOOM  
"Subsidize" (Decoy)
- 8 MORTIFICATION  
"Martyrs" (Metal Blade)
- 9 STIR  
"Temple Taboo" (Kalubone)
- 10 KING JAMES  
"Heaven Is For Everyone" (Kalubone)

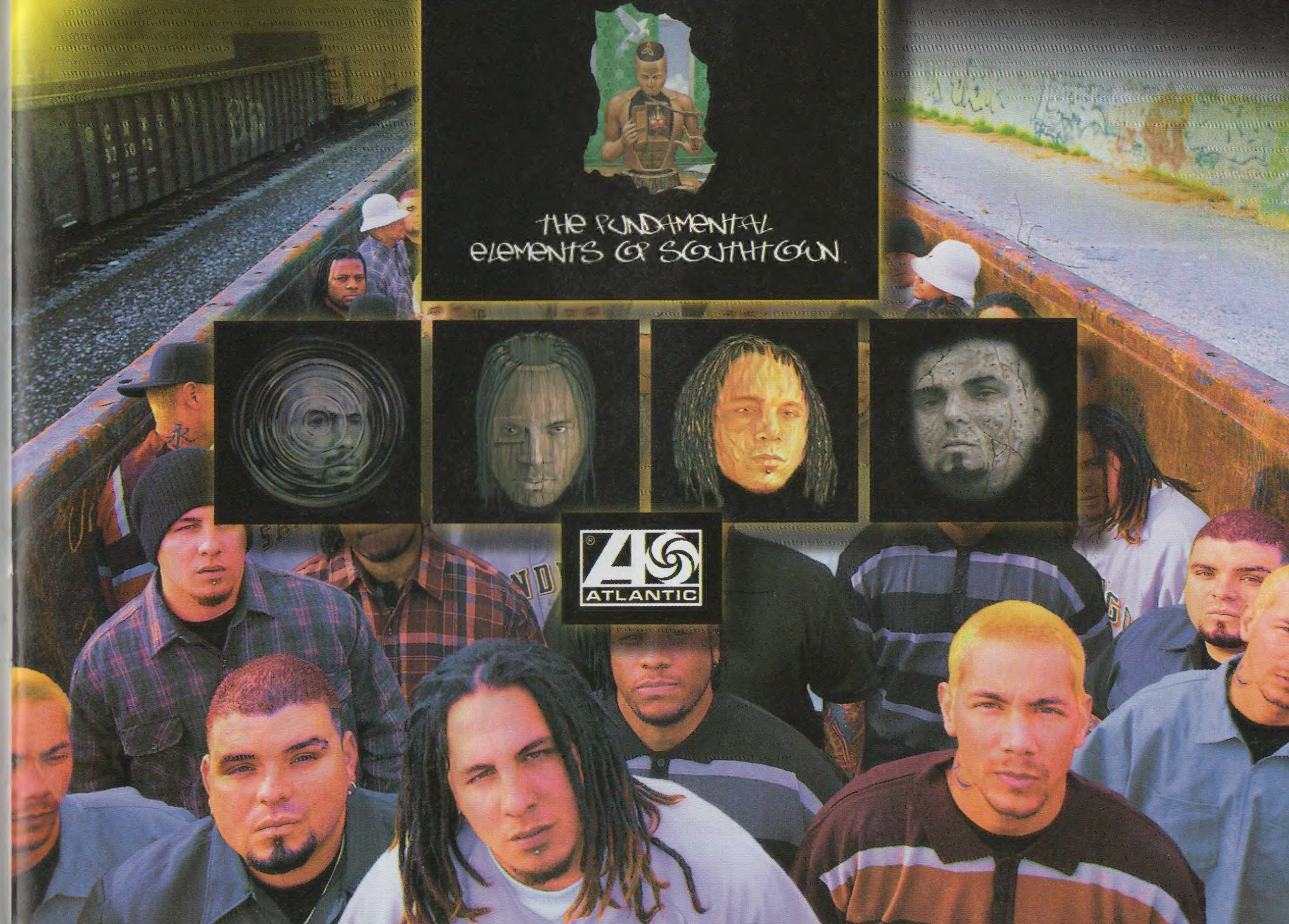
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Plankeye used to be a rarity: In an industry where bandmembers come and go like leaves on trees, the foursome actually held its original cast for five full years. Then the summer of 1998 hit.

Drummer Adam Ferry exited to work as a college pastor at an Evangelical Free Church in Fullerton, Calif. While longtime fans were a bit upset, the departure didn't change the overall sound of the band. But, two days before Plankeye set out to ride the summer festival circuit, Scott Silletta left. Silletta was the lead singer.

But the show went on: The main songwriters for the band, Luis Garcia and Eric Balmer, quickly took over lead vocal responsibilities while continuing to play bass and guitar.

Since a band is usually recognized by its lead vocalist, it was a surprise to some that Garcia and Balmer decided to continue under the Plankeye name. However, Tooth & Nail/BEC president Brandon Ebel supports Plankeye's decision. "It was only natural for them to keep going because they were the main nucleus of the band," Ebel says. "If you've been writing most of the music for a band and your singer leaves, that doesn't mean you're going to break up."

Of course, several bands have experienced vocalist changes and survived—one of the most recent being the Newsboys, when Peter Furler came out from behind the drums to sing lead after vocalist John James left. Balmer laughs at the parallel, saying he and Garcia "stepped up to the microphone."

"In one sense it was terrifying," Garcia says of the change, "because I'd never done [lead vocals] and I had to just jump in there and do it without any rehearsals or anything."

But once Garcia and Balmer began playing their own songs live, the initial shock of losing two members was replaced by "a rewarding experience," says Balmer.

"Luis and I are getting to express ourselves more completely and more fully by singing our songs, rather than passing them off to somebody else."

"It's a big challenge for a songwriter to go to a performer and tell [him] how the song goes and what you were feeling when you wrote it and trust [him] to accurately portray that," Garcia says. "A lot of times in band situations the performer wants to put his own spin on it, which is totally fair. Now we have a little more fulfillment in singing those songs we felt so deeply about when we were writing them."

Then came the challenge of convincing others they were still the same band. "It was all obstacles after those two left," says Garcia. "There were some people who felt we should keep going; there were some who felt we shouldn't."

Strong support from their record label, management and

fans gave them the push they needed. "We've been encouraged," says Garcia. "A lot of our friends have rallied around us and have been a source of encouragement to us. I thank God for that."

With the support of those closest to them, the two persevered. The result? *Relocation*—an album Garcia and Balmer believe is their finest work. "When we went in to do this record, we pretty much did exactly what we wanted," Garcia says, "making an album we would be proud of."

Ebel affirms their efforts: "This new Plankeye record is one of the best records BEC and Tooth & Nail have."

The biggest "problem" the two have encountered thus far is people misinterpreting the songs. Several songs sound like they may be about the departure of Silletta and Ferry. But the coincidences are unintentional. "No song on the record is in reference to Scott or Adam," Balmer says.

Garcia adds, "A lot of the songs were written before those guys left." In fact, "Goodbye" is about going through different phases in your life, while "Call Me Liar" was written about Garcia's wife.

The decision not to write songs about the changes Plankeye has experienced reflects Balmer and Garcia's feelings about the situation. "Adam left to work in college ministry and Scott's heart wasn't in it anymore," Balmer says. "Louie and I loved what we were doing and we wanted to keep going with it." Silletta declined to be interviewed for this article,

but has gone on to form Fanmail on Tooth & Nail records. A note on Fanmail's homepage says Silletta left Plankeye for "personal reasons (partly due to the hardships of touring and never getting to see his friends and family)."

Plankeye has experienced many changes, but the future looks bright. They have already secured a slot opening for the Supertones this fall after a summer full of festivals. "Luis and Eric are two individuals that fans of Christian music are going to get to know over the next several years," says David Bonson, president of Plankeye's booking agent and management company.

"They're both outstanding songwriters and producers, and the best days of Plankeye are certainly in front of them, not behind them."

Balmer and Garcia still realize there is a possibility of rejection when a drastic change in band lineup occurs. With sincerity in his voice, Balmer says, "If this record bombs, and if people hate it, and we're the laughing stock of the Christian music [industry], I really don't care. We've been true to who we are. We're not trying to manipulate things. We're not trying to be anything we're not. We're just writing songs and loving music and performing it."

plank  
eye

plank  
eye

**Walking the plank**

Members left, and their sound has changed. What's in store now?

by: Marcia Bartenhagen

**We've been encouraged,** Plankeye's Luis Garcia says. "A lot of our friends have rallied around us and have been a source of encouragement to us. I thank God for that."






# This Train has no bandwagon

by Brian Quincy Newcomb • **Mark Robertson**  
and This Train have their  
own brand  
of music—and humor.



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Live It Now



If Mark Robertson isn't the hardest working upright bassist in Christian music, then he's at least third or fourth. True, there are probably only a few acoustic double-bass players out there—but between leading his own band, This Train, and serving as a fixture in Rich Mullins' Ragamuffin Band, Robertson has definitely been around the longest.

Just off the road from supporting *The Jesus Record* and doing the Rich Mullins tribute tour, Robertson was back in the studio with his old cronies working on This Train's third, *The Emperor's New Band*. Probably their most fully realized album musically—they've added a big horn section—it's also more mature than their previous offerings. But like *Mimes of the Old West*, the music and songs are still fun—and funny.

Don't confuse the swinging brass sound found on part of the new record as "swing music," or jump to the conclusion that This Train has grabbed the tail of the swing/ska/rockabilly bandwagon. This Train was busy long before the Cherry Poppin' Daddies had an alternative radio hit. In those days, the best comparisons for Robertson & Co. were under-recognized bands like Southern Culture on the Skids and the Rev. Horton Heat. And secondly, says Robertson, "It's all rock 'n' roll to me."

He says the new record is more stripped down, which pleases him, because that's really what the band is best at. "My main criticism of This Train up until now is that onstage we were a rock 'n' roll band, but I was writing more singer/songwriter-type stuff," he says. "I was in a goofier framework, but I was still stuck in that approach. I wanted to make the songs like we really

sound. So, I wanted to write a lot of it in the studio. I had ideas, but I intentionally didn't form them until we got in there. What comes naturally to us is to play straight rock 'n' roll, be it rockabilly or whatever. To me it's all the same, it's all good. I don't get all the distinctions—if it's good it's good."

This Train goes back to basics, and indeed, it is good. "I like the concept of 'no politics' rock 'n' roll," Robertson admits. "The idea of music as escapism, in the healthy sense of the word. It's where you go, *I just want to forget that I don't particularly like my job. I want to dance and have fun for a night.*"

Hand in hand with this music is a self-deprecating brand of humor that doesn't take itself too seriously. For example, "We're Getting Nowhere (Fast)," on *Mimes*, looked with mild skepticism at This Train's commercial chances.

However, Robertson warns, This Train is not "The Emperor's New Band." That song takes its shots at big business rock industry superstar excess and formula-driven creative efforts. "I've been criticized by the label and other people of not being overtly spiritual enough in the songs," says Robertson of past efforts. "I've always avoided that very intentionally.

"I've hated the idea of trivializing Christ for the sake of a hit," he says. "What I'm happy about on the new record is that I wrote it very quickly. We'd come up with a musical arrangement and record it, and then I'd go off to a coffeehouse and write lyrics for it. Sometimes we'd even come up with a title, and I'd have to write lyrics for that concept. I found that the lyrics came out much more obviously, as far as my faith goes, but it wasn't forced or contrived."

Robertson is busy recording with the Ragamuffins, and then he plans to tour with This Train before going out again to support a new Ragamuffin record.

As for This Train, the planned first single is "She's a Rocket," a fun song of a young woman of faith who's hard to pin down and keep in a corner. Robertson warns: "They're already worried at the company, because it's about a girl. I had this great image of guys chasing this girl around, confused that she won't come their way, and get with what they're doing. But her mind is just on other things."

This Train is ready, once again, to take off.



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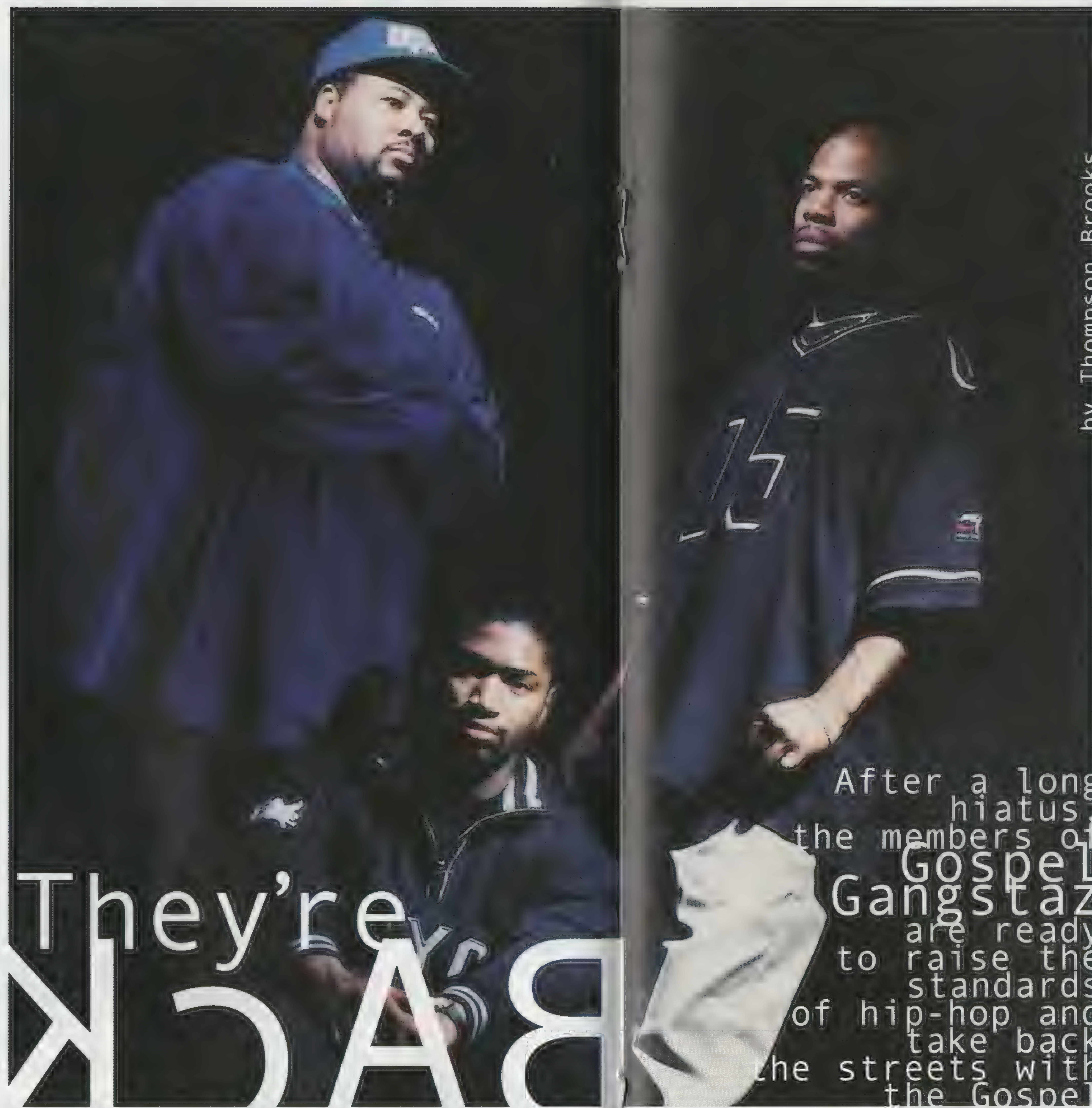
"Gospel Gangstaz came to lead by example," says co-founder and frontman Mr. Solo. "We've always been trailblazers from day one. We're trying to raise standards in our music, in our lifestyles, and in everything we do. It's going down, to the fullest degree."

After a four-year hiatus, the Original Gospel Gangstaz are back in force. They recently ministered to students in the Detroit, Mich., area in a joint venture with the Detroit Metro School System and the

Michigan Neighborhood Partnership. The Gospel Gangstaz shared their testimonies with students at three junior high schools and seven senior high schools. At the end of the week, the Gospel Gangstaz held two concerts; more than 250 Detroit young people accepted the Lord.

The O.G.G.s was also one of two Christian groups (with hard rock band Chevelle) included on MTV's *Under The Radar* video show, where viewers voted on their favorites of 20 new independent artists.

And, of course, they're blasting onto the scene with their long-awaited third release, *I Can See Clearly Now*, which begs the question: Where have they been? "We were in a contract with Frontline Records and a lot of things were going on over there," says Solo. "They were having a lot of legal and financial problems so they weren't ready to do the next album."



The group—Solo, Chillé Baby and Tik Tokk—finally landed at B-Rite, joining label siblings Kirk Franklin, God's Property and Trin-i-Tee 5:7. "They're the best company in gospel music," Solo says. "They're just top notch. They care about the well-being of their artists—making sure we're eating and living right, that we're creative, watching the people we associate with. They're involved in our lives and that's what's a blessing about it."

As heard on *I Can See Clearly Now*, the O.G.G.s' new style of "rhythm and gangsta" has no doubt made its mark. From the a cappella "Amazin' Grace," to the get-up-and-praise-God-quickly "I'll Be Good" (featuring Nu Nation), to the soulful "Once Was Blind," the O.G.G.s make it clear that no matter how long they may be gone, they'll always be here.

"I don't like listening to music and hearing the same thing for 10 songs," Solo says. "We cover a lot of topics, from repentance, to living right, to just enjoying life."

Some of those topics include getting right with God ("Let Us Pray") and trusting God even in tough times ("Questions"). Always rooted in the Scripture, the songs of Gospel Gangstaz reflect both the culture of the old neighborhood and the culture of the new life in Christ. "Being from the ghetto, I hate poverty," Solo says. "But I think a lot of people have tried to take the fun out of being a Christian."

Solo says the song "Once Was Blind" is about how God opened his eyes. "It's so street-relevant, everybody's gonna feel it," he says. "God did bring us out of drugs, gang-banging, illicit lifestyles. When you come out of those situations, you can talk about them, straight up."

In fact, everything about their ministry is informed by their powerful testimonies. For Mr. Solo and longtime friend Chillé, it begins in South Central Los Angeles. A perpetual cycle of violence, poverty, drug abuse, and single parent homes headed by moms trying to make ends meet was the norm of everyday living. Role models and a sense of belonging were found in gangs and their enrollment into the notorious Crips came with a membership card that appeared to have no expiration date.

But something happened that would affect them forever. "I was helping my friend in a gang fight and I got shot," Solo recalls. "When I first felt the shot, I was running, praying, *God, don't let me die ... just let me get to my mom so she can pray for me.*"

Solo's mother, like many mothers in the ghetto, worked two jobs just to pay bills, coming home too exhausted to do much of anything except to





eat and sleep. But she did pray for her children. "My mother had sown the seed into our lives," he remembers.

"She was there to stand in the gap, to be a light, and to pray for us; we chose to do other things."

His life was spared, but it wasn't until he faced a possible federal prison sentence that he turned his life over to God. "I remember praying that if He let me live, I would serve Him, but I'd been going my own way. One night, I started to cry. I went to funerals all the time, like routine, but I could never cry. This time, God brought all those things to memory; all my rebellion and crimes. I told my mom at 4 a.m. that I was sick of it all and I wanted to go to church on Sunday."

Chillé wasn't so enthused. "He felt betrayed," Solo says. "He got jumped one day and I wouldn't go ride with him. That's when the gang ties were really broken. Things were different."

Despite this new wall between them, they were still close. That closeness prompted Chillé to go to church with Solo. "There was a word for him and he gave his life to Christ that day."

Meanwhile, Tik Tokk was actually a member of the Crips' sworn enemy, The Bloodz. "I was 12 when I joined the gang," he recalls. "From age 12 to 19, I lived to hurt, rob and pillage. I was working for the enemy and I did it well."

Looking back, he thanks God for his time in jail. "I did three-and-a-half years, from age 15 to 19," Tik Tokk says. "Every time I was going to get into something really deep or a lot of people were going to get killed, I'd go to jail. I believe that's what kept me alive during my youth. Had it not been for jail, I'd probably be dead right now."

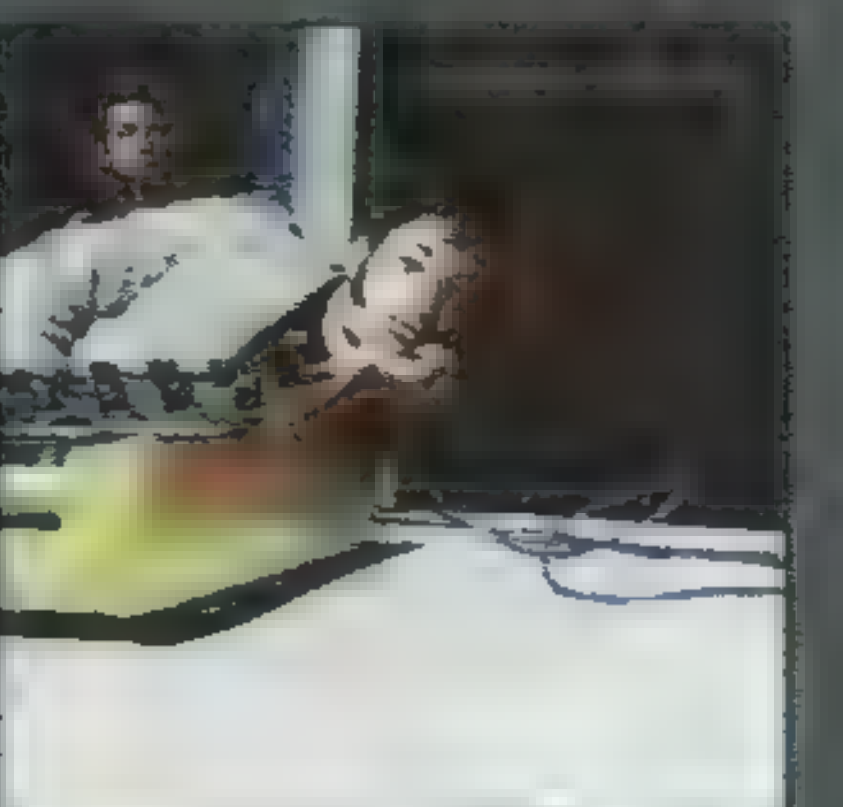
After he was saved, he hooked up at church with two other former gang members—whom he once would rather have killed. They began to pray, study the Bible, and go to church together. "The

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Gospel Gangstaz are a by-product of our relationships," Solo says. "We were young men, fresh off the street, and we all had a desire to serve God."

After solidifying their friendship, it only seemed natural to use their gifts, rapping and singing, to serve others. But at first it took a little persuading for Solo. "I had stopped rapping," he says. "I thought it was wicked. But then my brother-in-law told me, *God gave you the gift. Use it for Him.*"

Solo had come to the Lord in January 1990; he was rappin' for the Lord six months later. "The Lord started showing us why He gave us the gifts," Solo says. "He said, *Instead of rappin' about shooting your enemies and abusing women, tell them about My grace, My deliverance.* The gift of poetry was there, and I began to write from the Word."

The O.G.G.s began leading rap parties for the kids at their church, in prisons, wherever people would have them. They performed with other aspiring Christian MCs, some who went on to have their own record deals.

But they didn't desert their old friends in the gang. "They're still my friends, my homies," Solo says. "They respect who I am and what I do. I don't consider myself above them, but God has given me the insight to see the truth. I understand their pain, and they know I know. I gotta make the music for the homies. I believe in bringing the church to the people, not just bringing the people to the church."

In 1994, they joined the now defunct Myx Records through association with the Holy Terra label, added DJ Dove, and *voila*—the public was exposed to their first release, *Gang Affiliated*, setting a precedent for gangsta rap in Christian music.

"A lot of people was tripping off of rap music, saying *Rap? I don't know if that's godly*," Tik Tokk says. "A lot of people just hear bangin' tracks and somebody rapping over it and they shut it out. But then when they start to look into it, they're like, *Oh. That's authentic. That's real.* The Bible says we move from glory to glory and that's what I believe holy hip-hop is doing."

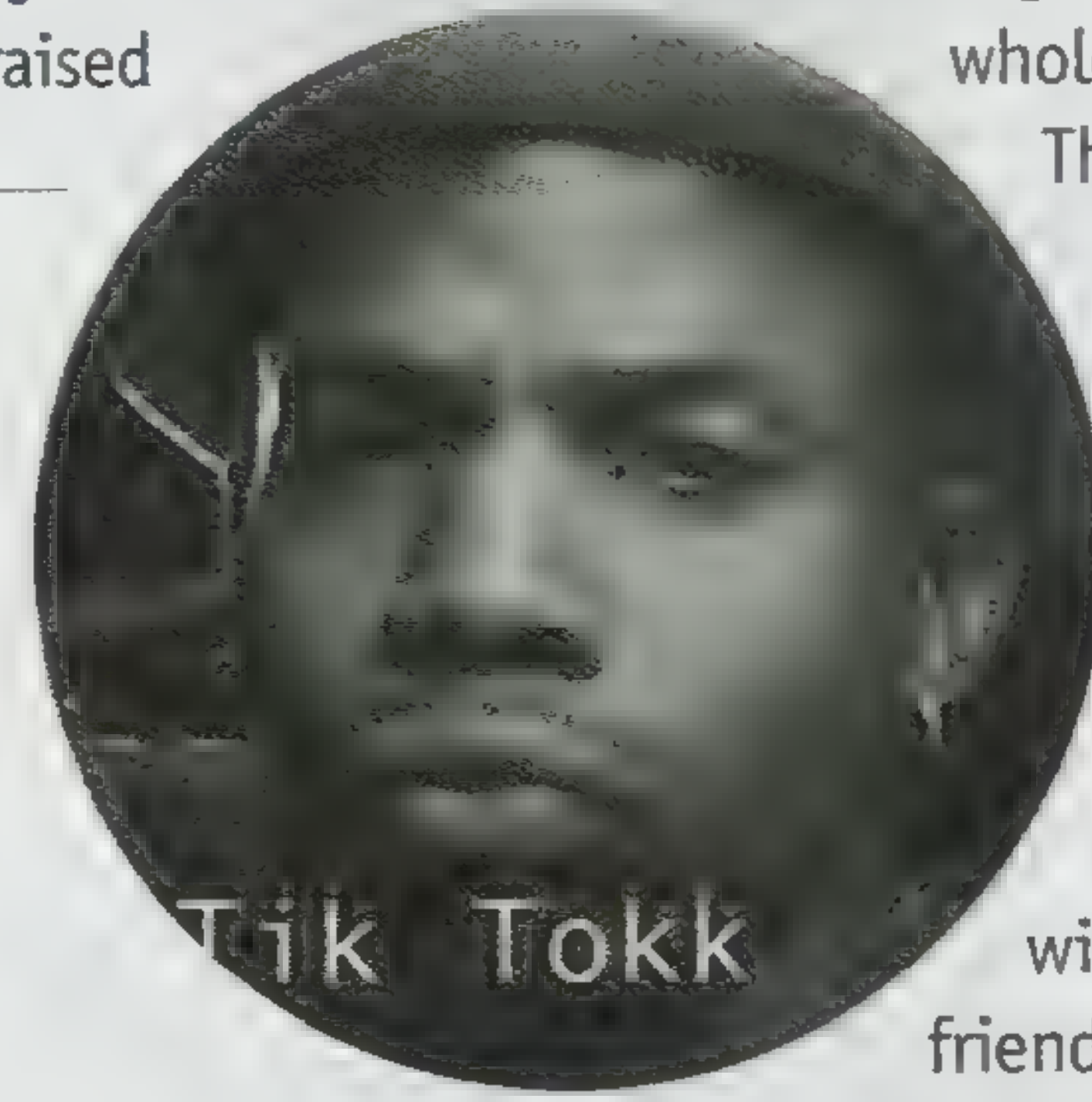
Things have come a long way from the early days of dc Talk, Michael Peace and J.C. and the Crew. However, from the beginning, O.G.G.s were one step ahead of the majority of their contemporaries. Their next CD, *Do Or Die*, raised the standard even more.



Mr. Solo



Chillé Baby



Tik Tokk

However, it wasn't long after completing the project that things began to go awry.

Tik Tokk had to leave the group, reaping hard consequences from his past life. He spent time in a maximum security prison in California. "Your past has a way of shaping your future," he says.

But unlike his former incarcerations, he had a whole new worldview. "I went this time a saved individual, knowing the peace and the power of God."

During his reluctant retirement, he was active in prison ministry, talking with inmates about Scripture and cultivating his own relationship with the Lord. "I believe God used that time to allow me to concentrate on Him, to reevaluate my spiritual life and ministry. I left there fired up and focused to do what God had called me to do."

Tik Tokk's return to the Gospel Gangstaz was joyfully received by Solo, Chillé, and those who have tuned into their message. The response continues to be astonishing. "We keep getting letters from people at concerts, from jails, everywhere. People hearing our music in a dope house!" says Solo. "That's the whole objective of this ministry, to see lives changed. That's why on every album, I say the prayer at the end of the CD, so people can know what to do."

Together again, the Gospel Gangstaz continue to break down barriers, not just because of their talent, but through the example of their brotherhood. As Tik Tokk puts it, the former enemies come together to show the world what God's love can do. "I just thank God He put me with Solo and Chillé. After 10 years of love and friendship, it has to be God. We're best friends, business partners, spiritual brothers and prayer partners. We're not just a group, we're family."

—additional reporting by P.R.E.Z.

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# When It Rains, It Pours

**aaron  
sprinkle**

After Poor Old Lu and Rose Blossom Punch, Aaron Sprinkle is starting all over again.

by Amy E. Dixon

Everyone, from my wife to my parents, thinks it's the best thing I've ever done. That's always nice to hear," Aaron Sprinkle unaffectedly says of *Moontraveler*, his debut on Organic Records. "It was going to be a side project, so I worked on it off and on. I was going to use this cover name and keep my name off of it as much as I could."

But the project quickly evolved into something greater, eventually becoming Sprinkle's solo debut. The former frontman for modern rock favorites Poor Old Lu and Rose Blossom Punch, Sprinkle wrote, produced, recorded and performed this project in its entirety.

It seems Sprinkle has always striven for growth as a songwriter and performer. In fact, such ambitions led to the demise of his successful run with Poor Old Lu. Sprinkle began to develop musical interests beyond what the band was doing, so he left to try new things—eventually forming Rose Blossom Punch. "I'd done two songs on a Tooth & Nail *Artcore* CD," he explains. "I was just going to do a solo thing but decided to give it a name [Rose Blossom Punch]. It was just me and Paul Mumaw, who was in Soulfood 76 at the time, and it sort of

says of Rose Blossom, "was a big personal, emotional thing that happened among us as friends. When that happened, I kind of started [*Moontraveler*] over, wrote it and recorded it in two weeks in my friend's basement. So it turned out totally different than what I was intending it to be."

The original intent was to make an entirely electronic recording. What actually developed is an intricate album of laid-back college rock, influenced by electronica "left over" from the original recordings. Sprinkle's growth as a solo artist isn't without a footnote to his past. Musically, *Moontraveler* is a mood record, but the songs are steady and sometimes subtly reminiscent of Rose Blossom Punch as well as Poor Old Lu. "About half the songs are directly related to some of the stuff we all went through in our circle of friends with the breakup. But I guess sometimes I feel a responsibility to make sure there's hope in the songs," he says. "I don't want to leave people hanging. But sometimes I do because that's life, you know? Sometimes we feel we've been left hanging."

**aaron  
sprinkle**

**waterdeep** everyone's  
beautiful

"EVERYONE'S BEAUTIFUL" captures the essence of Waterdeep. It exudes passion. Don and Lori Chaffer pour themselves out in every song, and the results are amazing."

—Cameron Strang, RELEASE



I've known Waterdeep for years, not only as performers, but as friends. Don and Lori Chaffer are two of the best songwriters around. Waterdeep's attention to detail in their live show makes for an unforgettable night. They truly are one of my favorite bands.

—Cliff Young, Caedmon's Call

"Combining a classic sound with a timeless message, Waterdeep has been quietly revolutionizing college rock for some time. Now that they're signed, they're bound to revolutionize the mainstream as well."

—Chris Well, 7Ball

"...a remarkable young band... vastly greater than the sum of their parts... Waterdeep brings careful, thoughtful poetic sensibilities to its clearly Christian lyrics. I can't say enough about the music, lyrics, vocals and ministry potential of this band."

—Thom Granger, CCM





It all started in 1982 when a 7-year-old that loved rap decided he could write his own rhymes. Then, four years later, his younger brother discovered he could do it, too. But it wasn't until 1996's Cornerstone Festival that the members of Sackcloth Fashion got the chance to play and solidify themselves as one of the most innovative groups in Christian hip-hop.

But what's up with that name? The group's Mr. Tru says that while rappers usually get their start by outdoing each other, "we're trying to be the opposite." Humility, he says, is what Sackcloth's all about. "We're trying to fashion our mentality and lifestyle after the Old Testament when someone would put on sackcloth, shave their head and sprinkle ashes on their head. It was the ritual when someone humbled himself before God."

The members of Sackcloth Fashion, Tru says, "are just guys who have a desire to be true, living in humility and meekness, and making it a fashion in our lives. God says to those who humble themselves, He will lift them up."

And Sackcloth Fashion—the San Diego trio SirROC, Mr. Tru and Absolute1—is being lifted up, having already shared the stage with L.L. Cool J, Wu Tang Clan and the Refugee Camp All-Stars. "That's the kind of stuff we try to get in to as much as possible," Tru says. "As Christians, we're supposed to be a witness. I don't think I have the gift to preach, but I like to write rhymes."

"Most of the time, our audiences are not the ones that are at church," Tru says. "We want to try to be Christ-like and be good witnesses and still make music that's quality enough to take to people outside the church."

Their music is what they feel makes them different. In a world where groups tend to imitate other styles, the members of Sackcloth Fashion feel Christians need to be the ones with original music. Their new album, *Something For Everyone To Hate*, blends unconventional, thick beats with acoustic guitars, vocals, even jaw harps—without losing that distinctly underground hip-hop feel. "Why can't we be original?" Tru asks. "Every once in a while, someone comes out and is considered innovative. We figure as Christians, our stuff should be innovative because our God created everything. His people should have the most creative music."

—Melody Alexander

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OK, let's get the name thing out of the way. "It's from the tennis player," explains .rod laver vocalist, Rudy Neilsen. "Rod Laver had an Adidas shoe named after him. Our bass player, Chris, had the shoe, and it started the trend among all the people we hung out with—everybody bought the Rod Laver shoe. We were sitting around trying to figure out a name, and we looked down and we were all wearing the shoes. So, it was like, let's just be .rod laver."

So there's no secret spiritual meaning? "We like it because it doesn't sound like anything else, it has nothing. We're not that deep."

Maybe not be deep, but they certainly are angry. Says Nielsen, "I come from being a

knucklehead, getting in fights and stuff. The music funnels my emotions and attitudes; it's a way for me to express my anger with a Christian filter to it. A lot of the music in this genre is driven by anger, so what I try to do is also say, *What would God have me do?* There's plenty to be angry about every day, but I'm 25 years old and had to find a better way to channel all of that aggression."

.rod laver's Screaming Giant Records debut, *Essence of the Game*, has arrived within a year of the group's formation. It picks up on the strengths of their five-song demo—a hardcore sound with a funky bottom and bold rap-influenced vocal style. "I feel we're just a really hard hip-hop group," Nielsen says. "As far as influences, everybody in the band comes from a dif-

ferent place. I come from hip-hop, old school, anything from New York: Eric B. & Rakim, KRS 1, things like that. Our bass player's more into new school funk, like Chili Peppers, 311; and our guitarist is really metal-influenced—not glam-rock, more like Ozzfest metal."

But it's lyrically that .rod laver steps away from those bands. Nielsen sings, raps and rants, but the words tend toward those in the song "Cry": *Please believe He be the one that I trust in all/ His name I'm gonna call cause His word stands tall/ El Shaddai, El Shaddai, the God on high.*

The band recently started work on a new record, which finds them heading in a unique musical direction. "With the new songs, we've entered a place that's more our own," Nielson says. "It's pretty much a blend of hip-hop and heavy groove music. We just finished pre-production on eight songs and are blown away by how they sound."

—Brian Q. Newcomb

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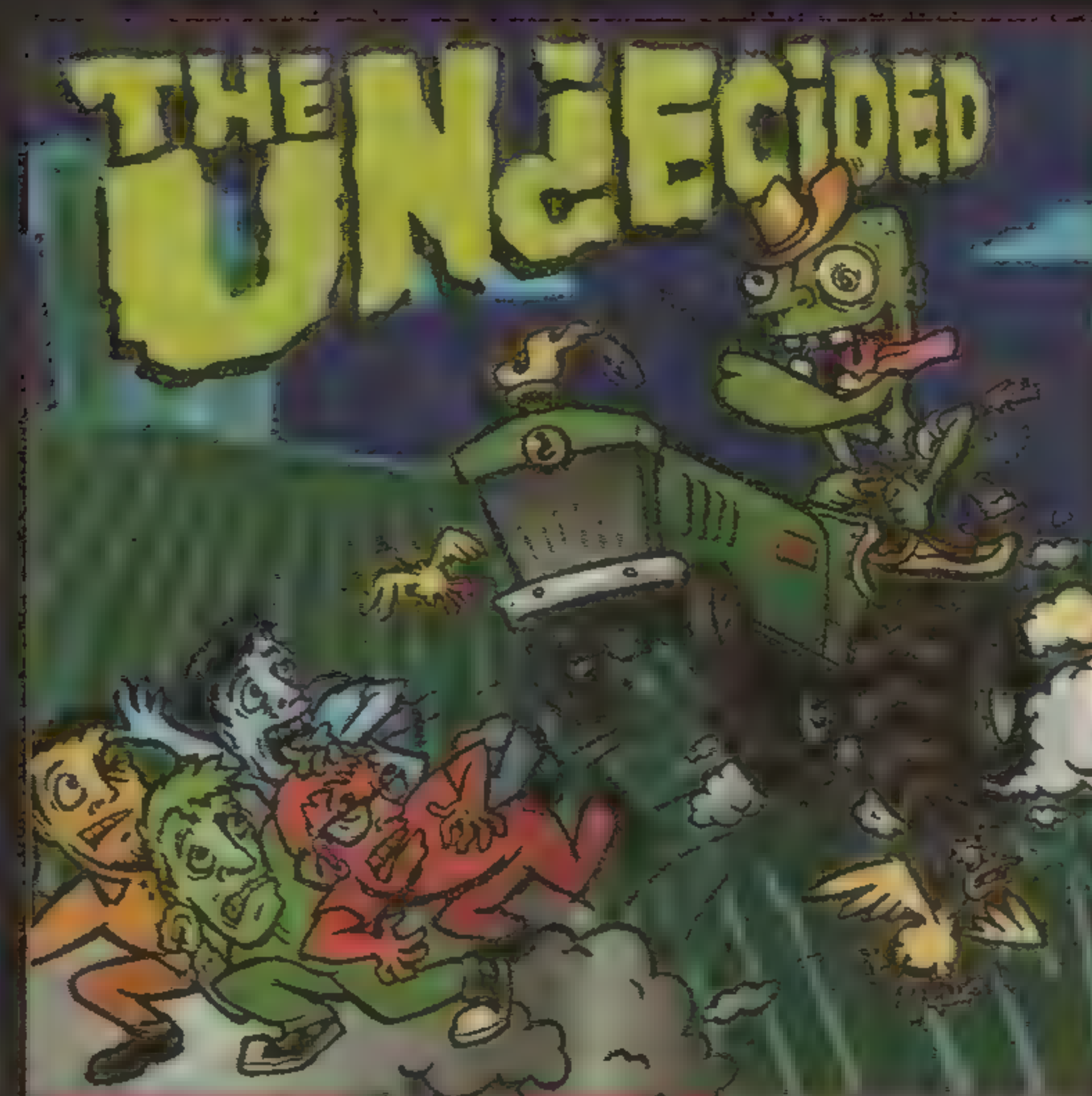
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Religion typically blames Satan for The Fall, but not rock band Blame Lucy. "We don't blame Lucifer for causing us to sin, we blame him for tempting us to fall," lead singer and bassist Doug Meacham says.

The band's somewhat unorthodox name—an abbreviated version of "blame Lucifer"—befits their objective of avoiding spiritual scapegoats and spreading the news of God's goodness. "Our ministry is based on showing the love of God," Meacham says. "People spend a lifetime looking for love, and we're able to share the love of Jesus with them and fulfill any longing they've ever had. In a generation where kids are trying to be 'accepted,' we are able to present Someone who accepts them no matter what they are like."

Ministry is the heart of the music on Blame Lucy's latest, *Gong Show*. "We don't

just want to entertain Christians," Meacham says. "We want to do outreach, too. The main focus of the music is ministry."

And the band can reach people others may not. "There are a lot of people who would never set foot in a church, but they may come out to a music festival or a state fair to hear a band," Meacham says. "This gives us a chance to reach out to this group of people in a non-confrontational method."

Meacham and guitarist Fred Blanchard started their first band when they were in eighth grade together. Later, they formed the band Legacy and signed with Star Song Records. After that band broke up, the two friends joined up once again in 1996 to form Blame Lucy. Drummer Mike Nicklaus and the recent addition of guitarist Ryan Smith round out the current lineup. "He brought a new flair of sound

into the band," Meacham says of Smith.

Blame Lucy has a fresh style—after all, the goal, Meacham says, is to "write music we like to listen to"—but the band also realizes the value of having something to say. "The lyrics can speak to the kids, and we try to make sure they stand out," Meacham says. "We don't try to bury the words in the mix. We try to live the way the Lord would have us live and let the lyrics speak for themselves."

—Amy Sondova

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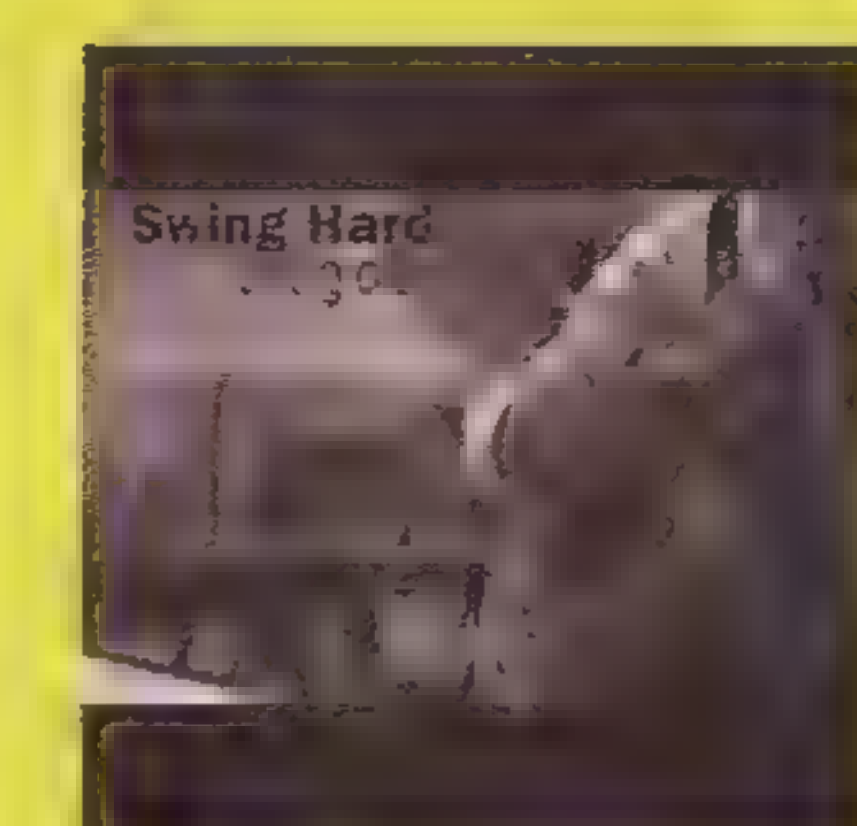
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## FIET OF SOUL

"Freight Train" 3:19  
(written by G. Beadles) © 1998 Shantred Music (ASCAP)  
A unique mix of funk, pop and folk-rock sets this band apart. Their debut, *Incommunicado*, is rapidly increasing their fan base outside of their native home in Georgia. *Incommunicado* strikes a healthy balance between tackling serious subject matter and exhibiting a sense of humor. For more information, check out [www.fietofsoul.com](http://www.fietofsoul.com) or call (770) 831-2718.

## UNVEILED

"Jesus Drove A Cadillac" 4:18  
(written by S. Doby) © 1999 Princess Shae's College Fund (ASCAP) 7not Music (ASCAP)  
The darkly ironic "Jesus Drove A Cadillac" comes from *You're Music*, the new project from Sean Patrick Doby, former singer for Veil of Ashes. Produced by Michael Roe of the 77's, the album also features the only 1998 recording of the 77's, who played on most of the tracks. Says Roe, "Sean finally got his dream of replacing me in my own band." For more information, email [90degree@univoxysga.com](mailto:90degree@univoxysga.com) or check out [www.77s.com](http://www.77s.com).

## GOSPEL GANGSTAZ

"I Can See Clearly Now" B-Rite Music 2:30  
(written by Meach, Mr. Solo, Cittle Baby, Tik Tokk) © 1999 Denante Shakti (ASCAP) / By the Book Publishing/ Animator Music/ Todd Tunesy/Bondie La Music (BMI)  
Mr. Solo, Cittle Baby and Tik Tokk are deeply committed to accountability to each other, their families, and their pastors and church families. *I Can See Clearly Now* (B-Rite) is the most diverse and up-front project, both musically and lyrically, of the three albums they've recorded. "I don't like listening to music and hearing the same thing for 10 songs," Solo says. "We cover a lot of topics from repentance to living right, to just enjoying life."

## THIS TRAIN

"She's A Rocket" Organic Records 3:56  
(written by M. Robertson, J. Richter, Cobra Joe) © 1999 Ross Island Music Publishing (SESAC)/ Alien Autopsy (SESAC)  
"I originally meant for 'She's A Rocket' to be about this guy trying to meet this girl who manages to elude him," explains songwriter Mark Robertson. "Then the spiritual melody hit me when I went to flesh out the lyrics. What this girl knows about her faith and her spiritual identity and her final destination is so foreign to the world." *The Emperor's New Band* is available from Organic Records.

## MORTAL

"Enfleshed" KMG Records 4:39  
(written by Gyro) © 1991 Lanota Publishing (BMI)  
Combining metal, pop, techno and punk, Mortal created a fresh sound for Christian rock. Never a band to settle for mediocrity, band leaders Jerome and Gyro—who went on to form Fold/Zandura—made sure the Gospel was presented to their audience through word and action. Mortal lives on in the double disc re-release of *Lust and Fathom* from the KMG Classic Archives series.

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SKADADDLES

"Upside" Eclectica Music 3:10  
(written by M. Mabass) © 1997 Matt Mabass  
Having played shows with the likes of Squad 5-0, the Insyderz, and Mustard Plug, the nine-member band from Georgia has built a name for themselves with their original music and high-energy live shows. Their debut, *Scoop It Up*, is on Eclectica Music.

BLAME LUCY

"We've Done It All" Gray Dot Records 2:50  
(written by Blame Lucy) © 1998 Gray Dot Songs (ASCAP)/Tomorrow Or The Next Day (BMI)  
Since the early '90s, Blame Lucy has been carving a niche for themselves in the Christian rock/alternative field. Combining flanged guitar, crunchy rhythm and cult vocals, the band provides radio-friendly modern rock. This group has boldly accepted the responsibility placed on them and continues to reach listeners on their latest album, *Gong Show* (Gray Dot).

AARON SPRINKLE

"Antennae's Wife" Organic Records 3:26  
(written by A. Sprinkle) © 1999 Bousseau Music Publishing (BMI)/Solid People Songs (BMI)  
While *Moontraveler* (Organic) has Aaron Sprinkle all over Old Lu and Rose Blossom Punch (unique signature all over it), it's very different from anything he's ever done before. "This is a new thing for me," he says, "because I recorded it myself—I just sat in a room and created everything. The result is music that artfully mixes the emotionalism of Neil Young with the moodiness of The Cure."

DOGWOOD

"Feel The Burn" Tooth & Nail Records 3:41  
(written by J. Kemble, S. O'Donnell) © 1999 Thrifty Moon River Publishing, Inc. (ASCAP)  
San Diego punksters Dogwood are veterans to the punk scene. "We've been around awhile. We were there when Blink 182 started," says guitarist Sean O'Donnell. Now on a new label, Dogwood feels they are better than ever. "Josh and I wrote most of the lyrics," he says of *More Than Conquerors* (Tooth & Nail). "They're about living our lives, not getting down, and not letting the little things get to you."

ROD LAVER

"Split" Screaming Giant Records 4:14  
(written by Rod Laver) © 1999 Stoned Giant Publishing (ASCAP)  
With the popularity of such bands as Limp Bizkit and Korn, aggressive music and east-coast rap vocals, *The Essence Of The Game* (Screaming Giant) is a dynamic expression of the Gospel that is missing in the secular scene.

SACKCLOTH FASHION

"Pulling A Fast One" Syntax Records 3:16  
(written by M. Luv, Absolute, Sir Kocorniz) © 1999 Sackcloth Fashioned Sound (ASCAP)  
Sackcloth Fashion wants to be different. "We figure that as Christians, our stuff should be innovative because our God created everything," says Mr. Luv. "His people should have the most creative music." This attitude explains their sound on *Something For Everyone To Hate* (Syntax), a hip-hop groove fleshed out with piano and acoustic guitar.

LIL' RASKULL

"Lost Souls" Grapevine Records 3:32  
(written by Lil' Raskull) © 1998 Grapevine Records, Inc.  
Lil' Raskull's unique style of delivering the Gospel through rap is truly superb, as is his ability to relate with his audience and the trials which plague humanity. Heading Golgotha Missionaries, Lil' Raskull brings hope to youth with creativity, empowered by the Holy Spirit. *Certified Southern* His is available from Grapevine Records.

THE DINGEES

"Can't Trust No Men" BEC Recordings 2:46  
(written by M. Roberts, M. Hernandez, E. Luck) © 1999 Thrifty Moon River Publishing, Inc. (ASCAP)  
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Third Day  
Time  
Essential Records

It seems everyone is a critic when there's a new Third Day album. Some fans loved Third Day's self-titled debut, while others dismissed it as a clone of Hootie and the Blowfish. Some preferred the thicker, darker rock and lyrical progression of *Conspiracy No. 5*, while fans of the first album thought it too heavy and not "religious" enough.

The band's third project, *Time*, won't be any less controversial, as Third Day ventures in yet another musical direction—the rock 'n' roll band known for an amazing live energy and southern flavor is using a "less is more," stripped-down sound set to straightforward lyrics that suggest praise & worship. That change is bound to make some happy and leave others disappointed.

solid, memorable melody and the strong guitar rhythms that make Dogwood so popular. "Control" adds well-blended harmonies to simple, but honest lyrics (*Take what is Yours/ Make it Your own/ show my way home*).

Dogwood knows how to rock, as can be seen in songs such as "Everything Dies In Time," "We Cry Victory," and "Confusion Zero." "Never Die" speeds things up even further, while showing the need for faith in God as vocalist Josh Kemple belts out, "You'll see how awesome it is when God sets you free." The title track, "More Than Conquerors," states in simple honesty, *God is for us/ No one's against us/ don't be stressed*.

Overall, *More Than Conquerors* shows Dogwood's growth as a band. With their truthful lyrics and hard guitars, Dogwood creates an album that is ear candy to deprived punksters everywhere.

—Melody Alexander



Dogwood  
More Than Conquerors  
Tooth and Nail

Dogwood has been around for awhile. Now signed to Tooth and Nail Records, the guys are back again, and sounding tighter and faster than ever. *More Than Conquerors* is a punk record full of adrenaline, powerful guitars, and edgy vocals that fans of bands such as Pennywise, Lagwagon and NoFX will love. They've also made fans playing with popular secular punk bands like Strung Out and Millinollin.

"Suffer," a heavy song, spouts with energy throughout. "Feel The Burn" pounds away with a

song comes to a close, the familiar gravel of Mac Powell's voice is back in full force with ample guitar accompaniment in "Believe," a simple tune about staying spiritually strong in the midst of tough times.

They take an introspective turn with the upbeat "Took My Place," with lyrics that read like the journal entry of someone who continues to be amazed by his salvation. It's not groundbreaking, but the simple honesty is easy to relate to. "Never Bow Down," a reflection of the faithfulness of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, is a standout track that rocks in classic Third Day fashion, with a singable chorus and intricate southern guitar stylings. "Sky Falls Down," with cleverly crafted pop musicianship, will easily find its way onto Christian radio.

Vocal diversity once again proves to be one of Third Day's greatest strengths. "Your Love, Oh Lord," an adaptation of Psalm 36, is a beautiful, intricate arrangement highlighted by Powell's deliberate presentation.

How fans respond to the project is simply a matter of taste. Those who prefer simple pop songs with a worshipful vibe will find *Time* to be a perfect addition to their collection. The album captures the joys, fears and struggles of Christianity in a pleasing, easy-to-swallow fashion. For those who like a little meat to chew, the dynamic expression of the human experience that characterized *Conspiracy No. 5* will be missed.

—Christa Farris

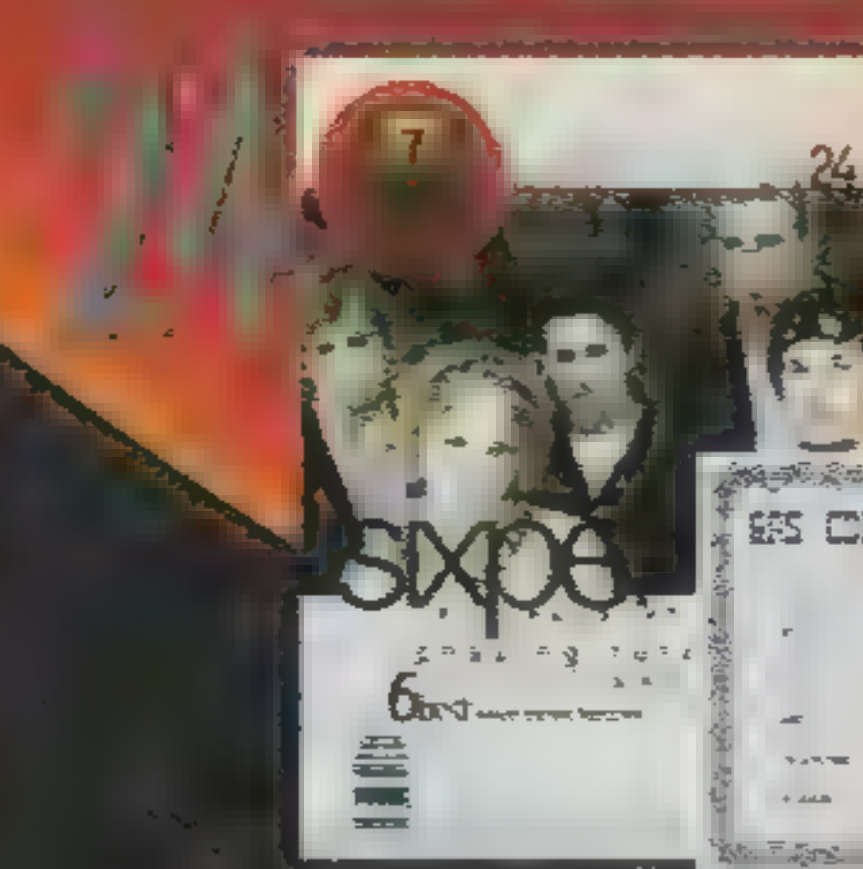
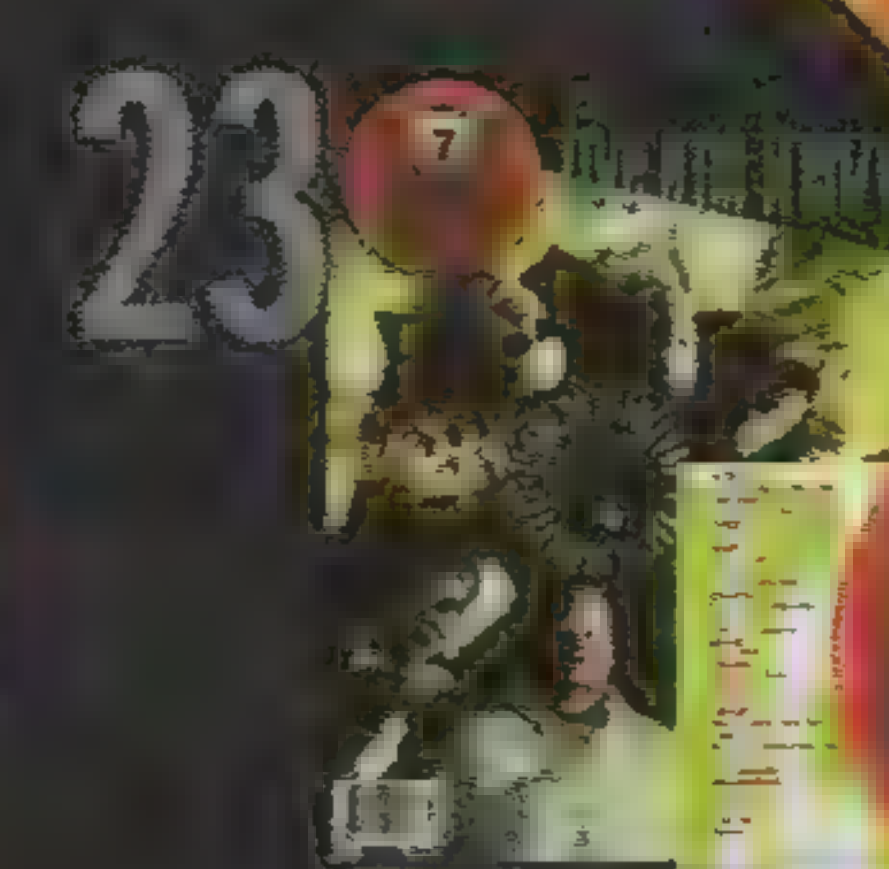
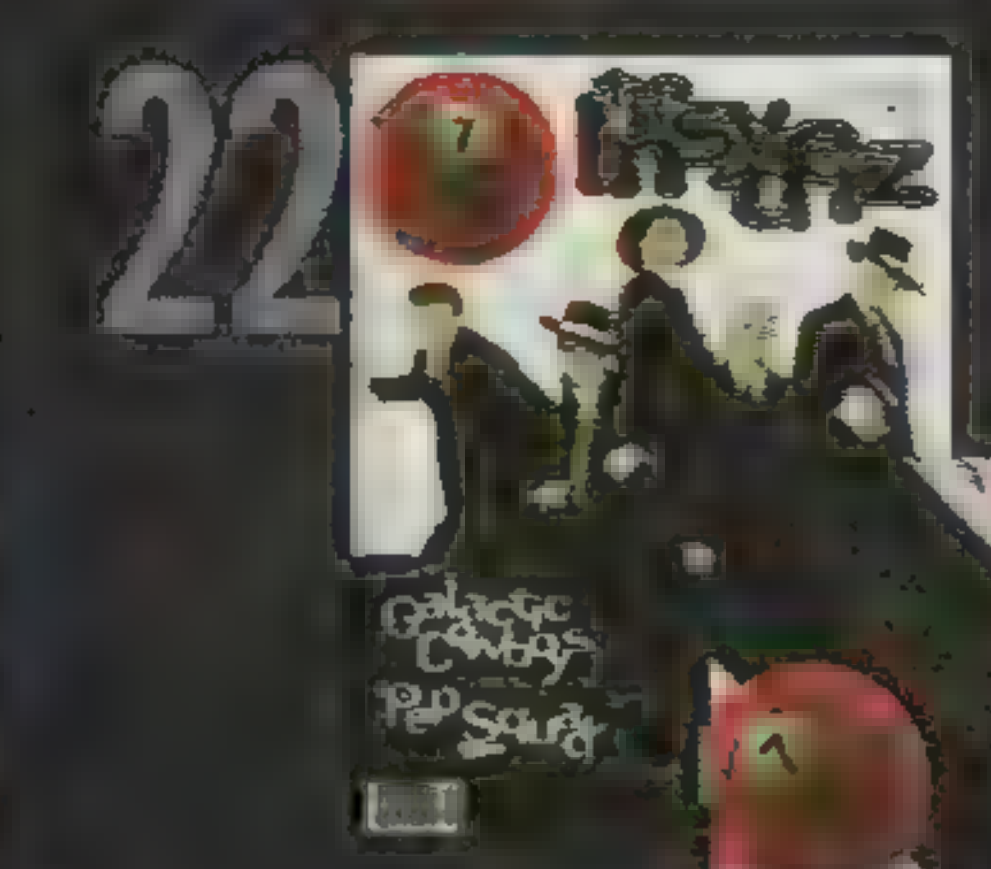
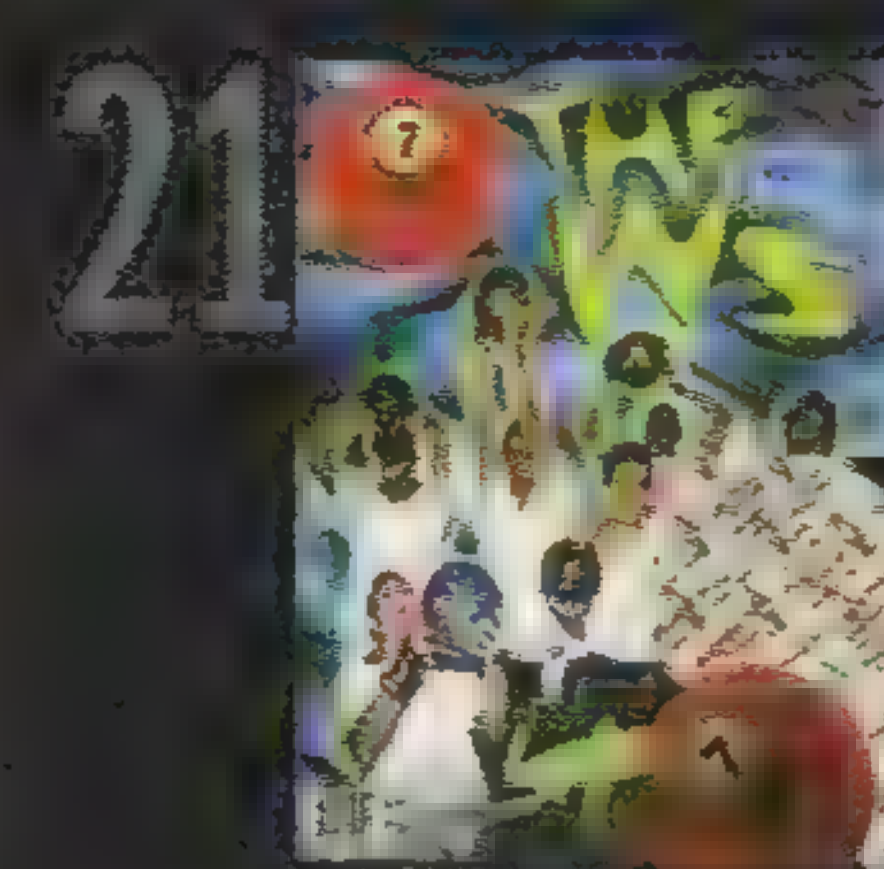
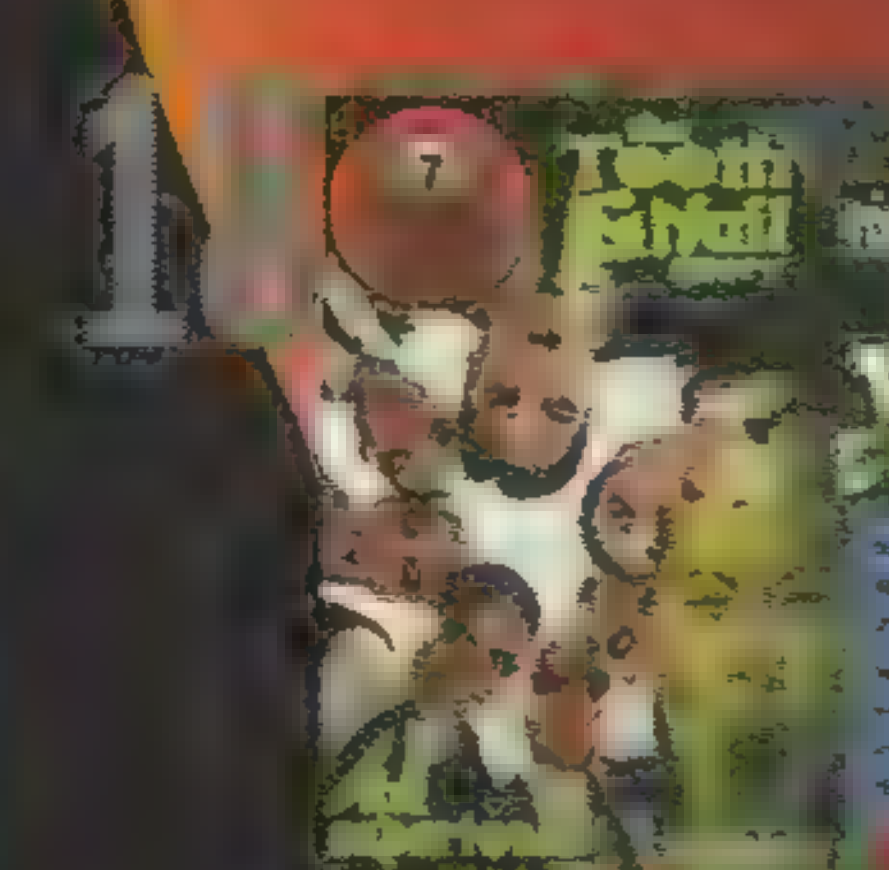
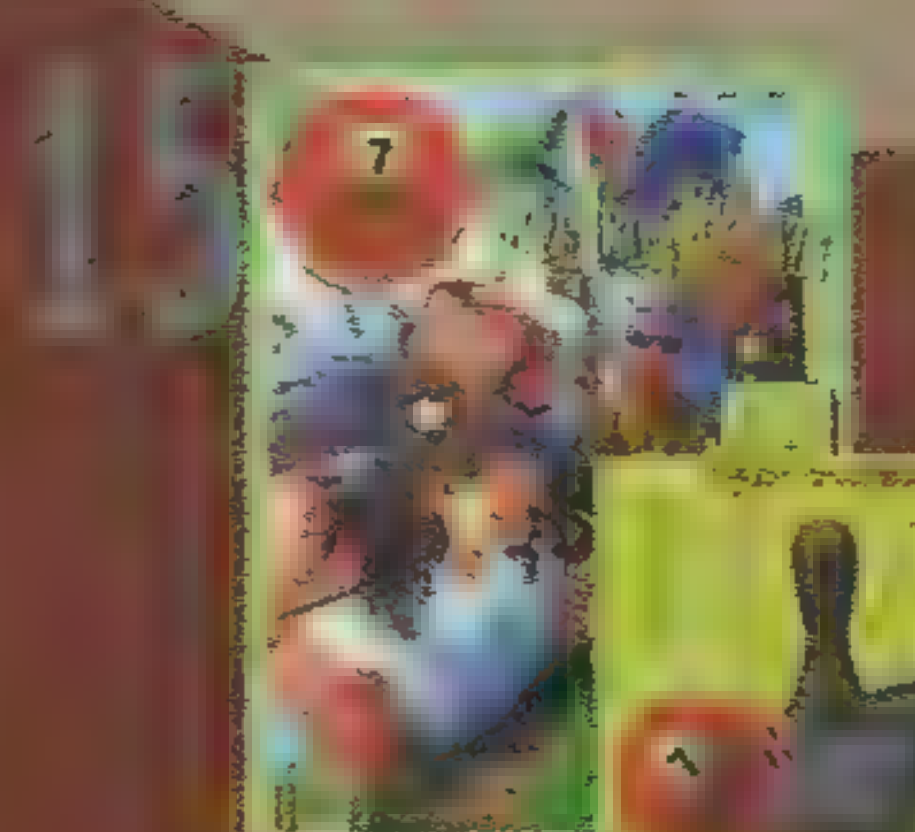
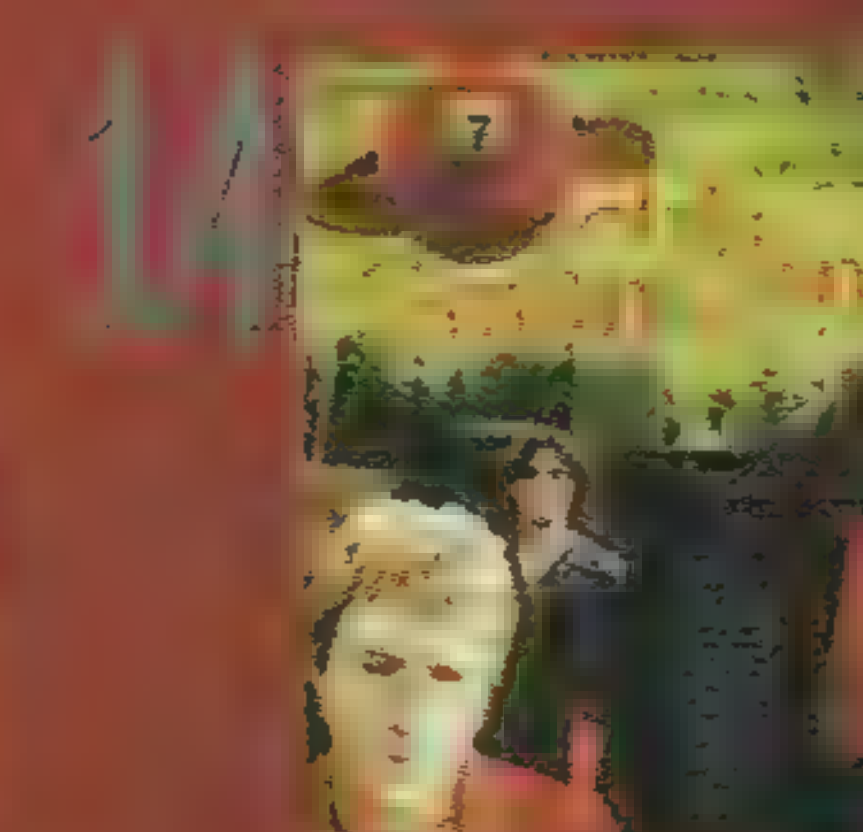
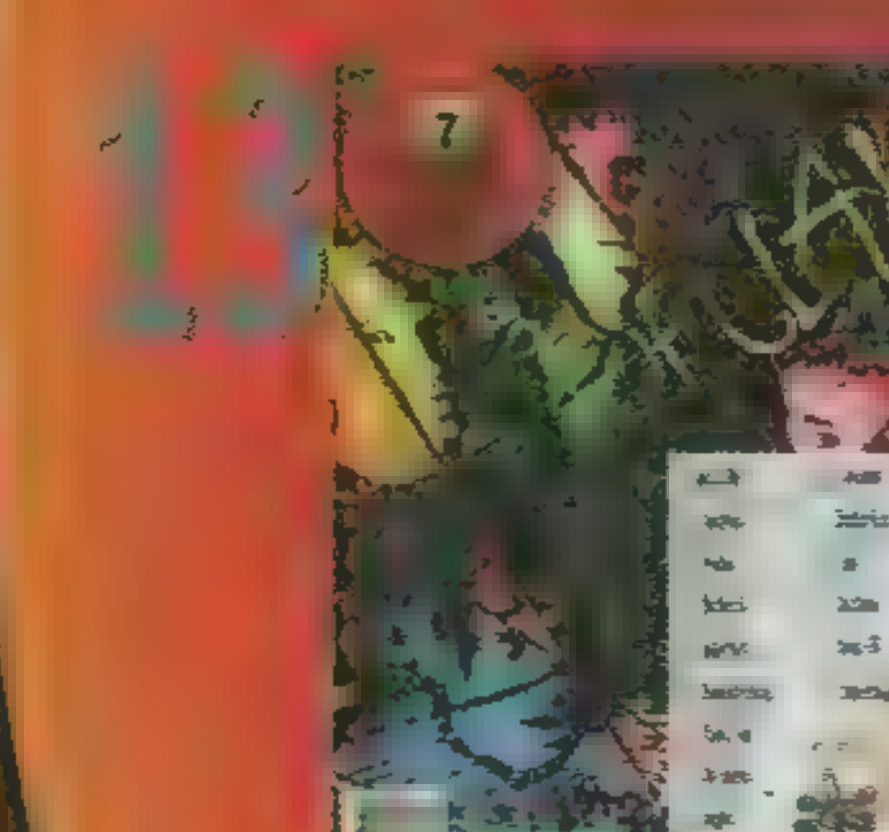
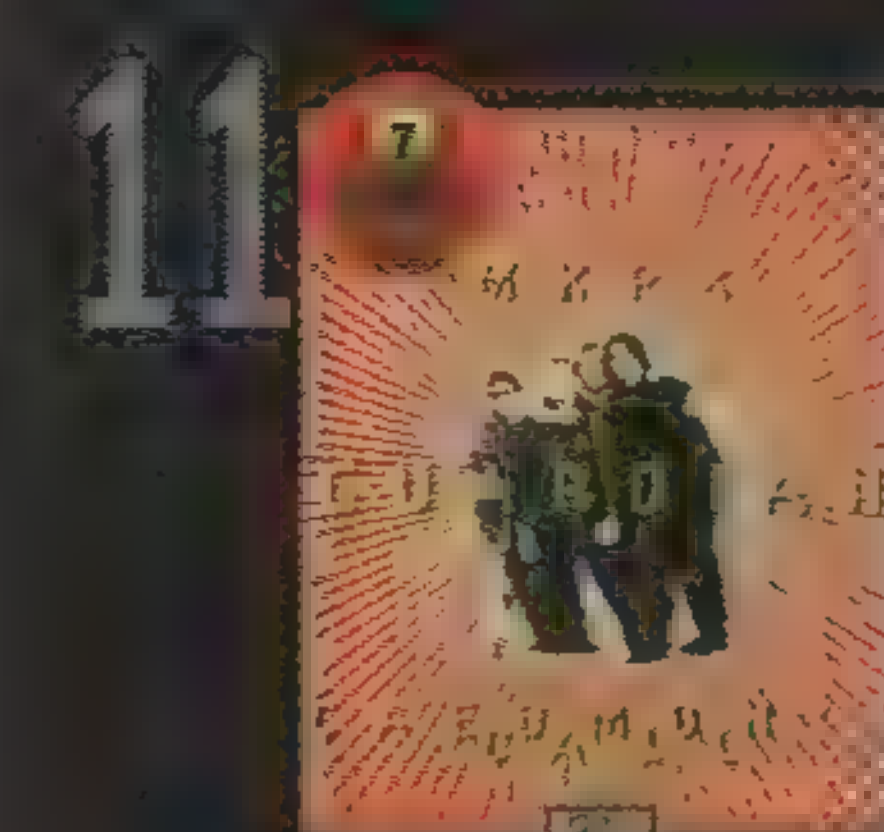
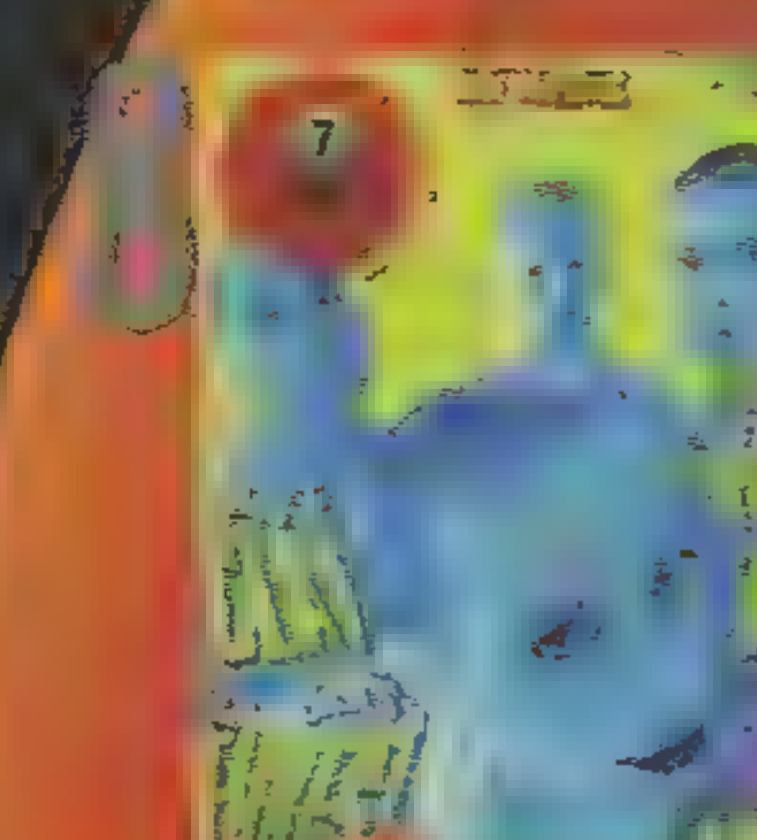
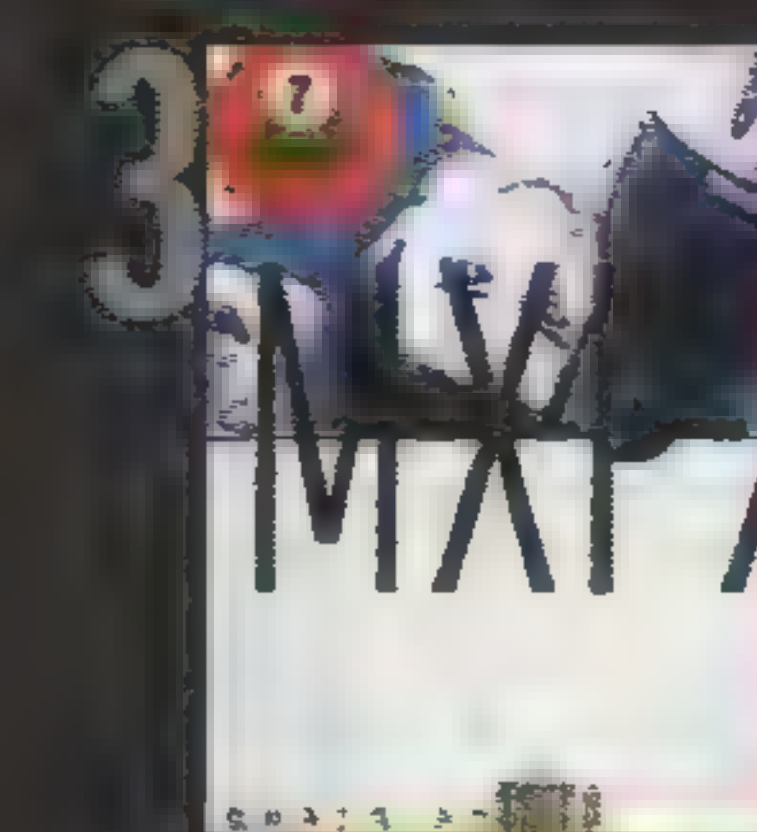
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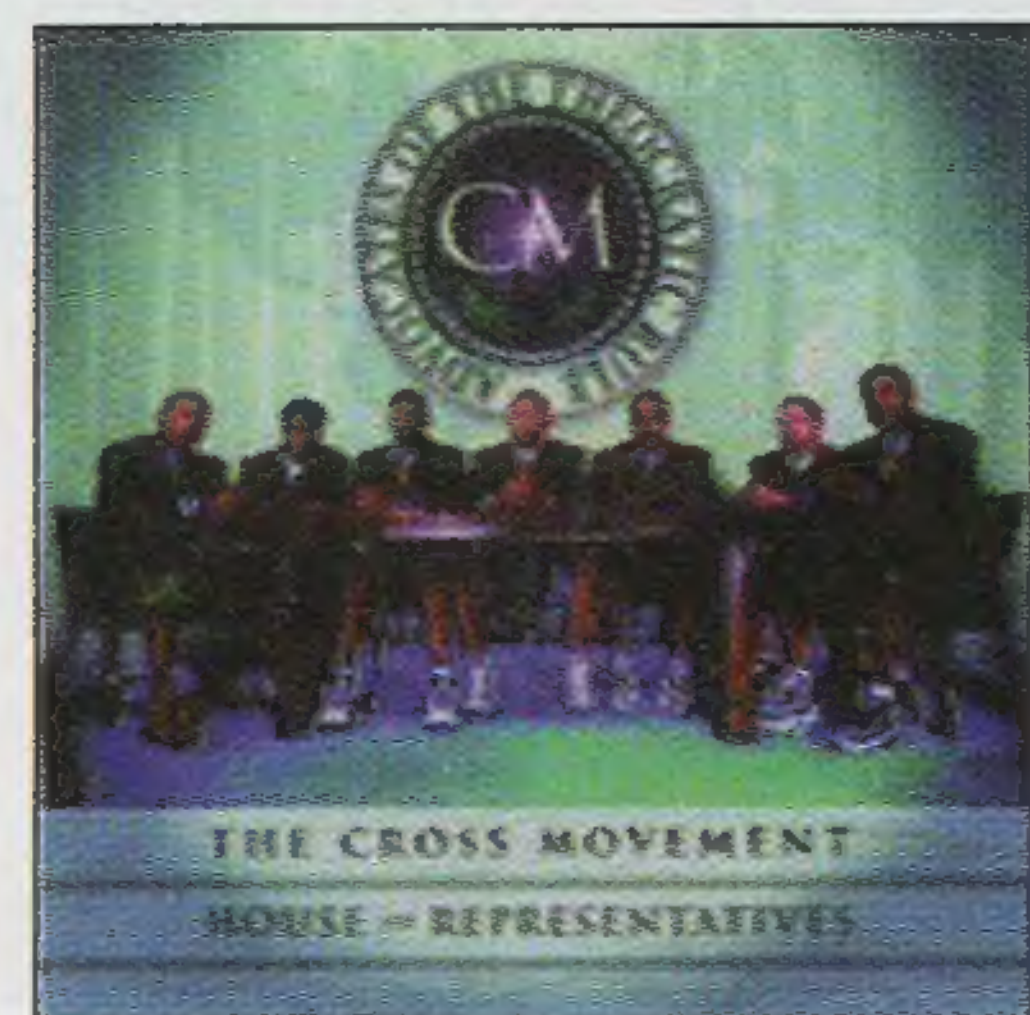
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Cross Movement  
House of  
Representatives  
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The new slammin' CD from Cross Movement—*House of Representatives*—is definitely one of the best CDs in the genre to hit the market this year. Not only do they arrive with a tighter sound, they come with the full crew, with Cruz Cordero, Enoch, and T.R.U. L.I.F.E. join-

ing the foray. Carrying the same hardcore message as their previous album, *Heaven's Mentality*, the tracks on *House of Reps* sound crisper and the overall production has been raised a level. The diversity of these rap theologians shows through clearly, from the harder tracks, like "Playa Hata #1" and "Maze of Madness," to the Latin guitar-picking on "Just For You" to the metaphorically jazzy "Off Tha Hook."

True to their straight-from-the-Word style, the 19 tracks feature various snippets that reflect what they do and what they go through in their mission.

If there ever was a rap praise & worship CD, this is it.

—P.R.E.Z.

R



Luxury  
Luxury  
Bulletproof Recordings

"Sweet God." Often sounding like an amped-up Smiths, Luxury needs to learn how to manage the former's melodic gracefulness in their stimulated excursions.

The strongest numbers on Luxury are the most sedate. "Mincemeat," one of the record's many moments that finds Bozeman licking his wounds, builds to a euphoric orchestral

"Here I am, no fame, no fortune, only palm in hand," moans Lee Bozeman in the opening bars of "Conquer & Destroy." After two records that met with moderate success, Luxury's third outing finds Bozeman taking stock of gains and losses, both personal and universal. Though not as moribund as the death-shrouded *Latest & The Greatest*, Luxury still finds time to revel in the uncertainties of mortality.

Though touted as a comeback record, much of Luxury feels like a band going through the motions. Where Bozeman and company formerly strutted their stuff with true Britpop cocky panache, the uptempo numbers on the eponymous release seem a bit murky. "When Those That Are Not Become Those That Are," which boasts such wry contrapositives as *Calendar for the fat girl/ Nobel for retard*, is mired in swampy guitar chops, as is the unusually direct

swell, raising goosebumps as it raises volume. "Lackluster" ponders both a spirit and universe out of joint. Over delicate guitar and plinking xylophone, Bozeman muses, "The stars are out of line tonight/ Orion seems confused/ What's a boy like me supposed to do?"

It is this very tension created by a world disjointed that colors the band's more successful numbers. While Luxury finds rest during the eulogistic "Robed in Light" (*When I am finally alive/ Perfect immortal divinized*), the record ends in uncertainty. "To You Who Gave Me Hope & Were My Light" concludes with the mournful refrain *I would that I were made new*. It is a sobering acknowledgement that resurrection comes daily, and that often those who give hope are the same ones that steal it away. It is this sort of irony in which Luxury finds inspiration.

—J. Edward Keyes

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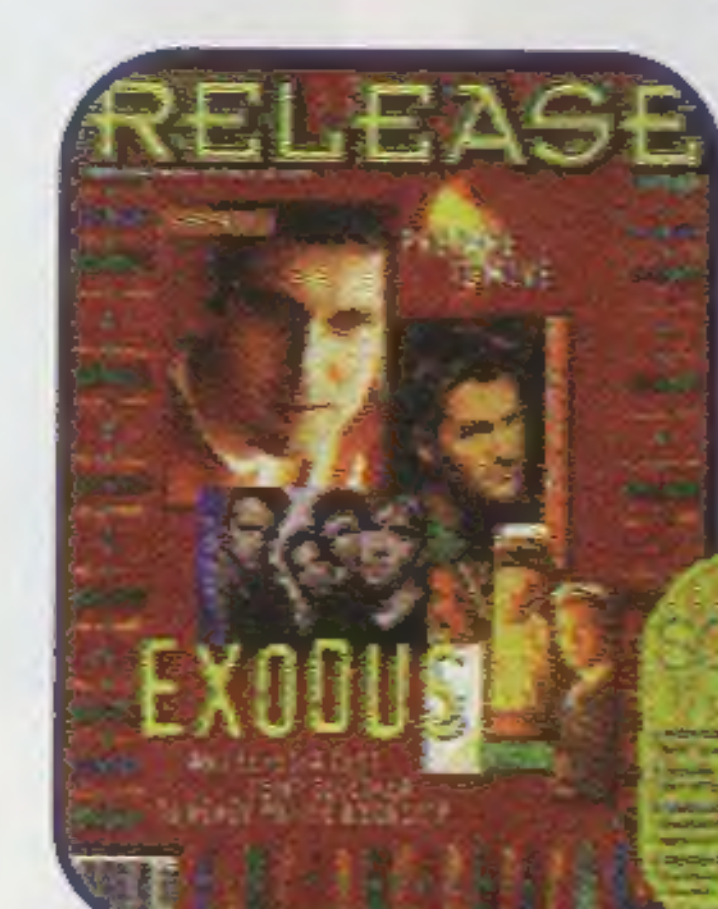
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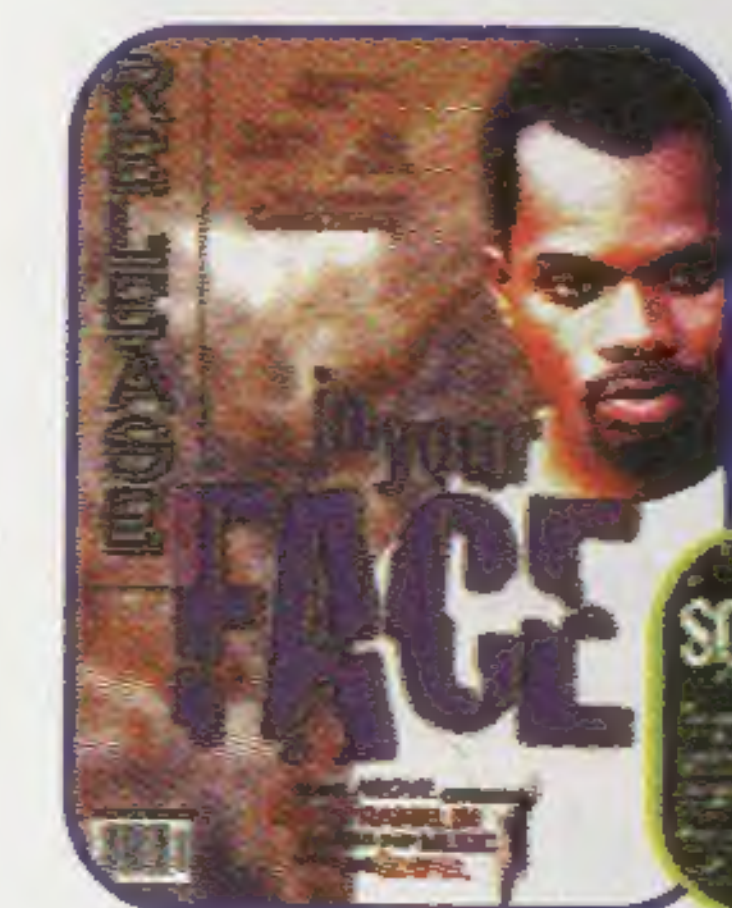
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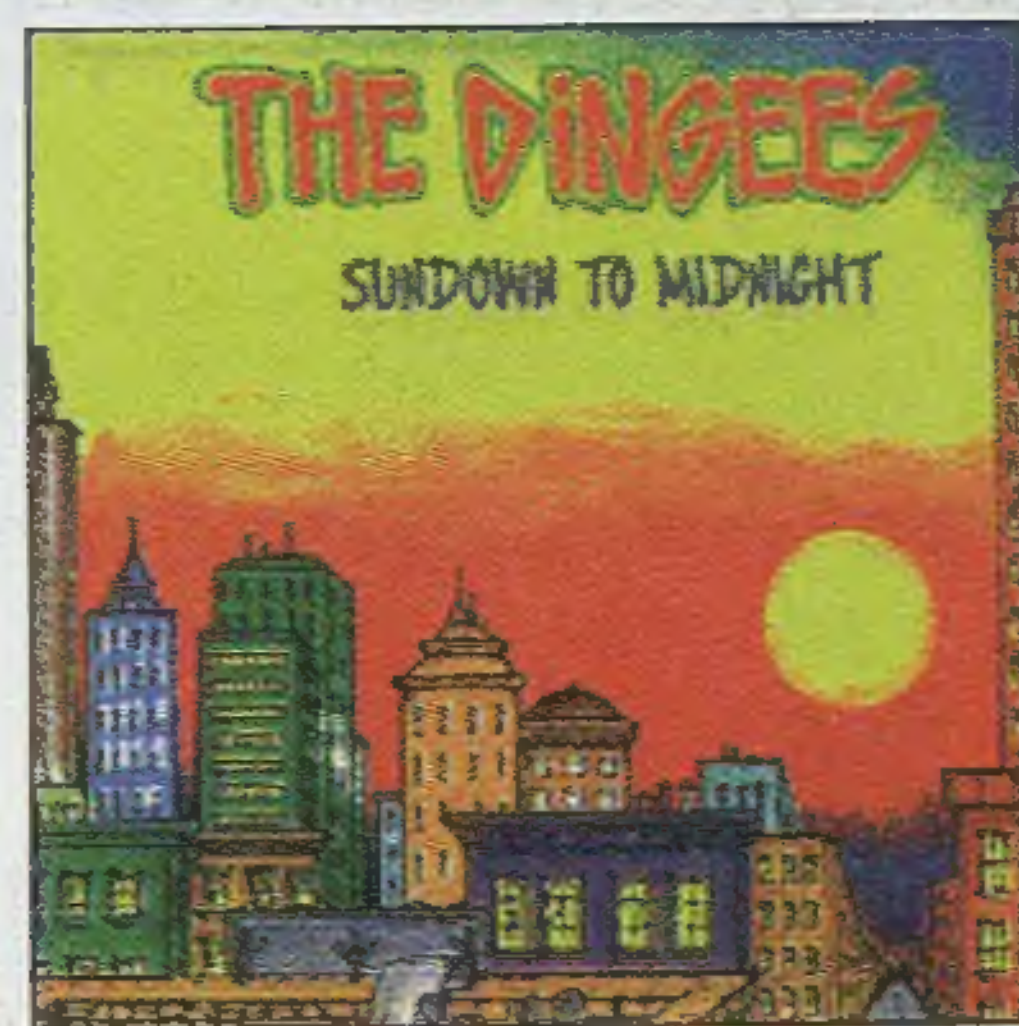
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The Dingees  
*Sundown to Midnight*  
BEC Records

As the Christian ska fad lurches into its 14th minute of fame, it's easy

to give plaudits to any band willing to position itself outside the skinny-tied juvenalia that has usually accompanied the late '90s brass-bound punk-in-sheep's clothing. On that note, Southern California's Dingees score beaucoup points: They are one of a dwindling number of outfits that eschew kiddie-humor lyrics while deftly aligning themselves closer to The Specials than No Doubt. The band's sophomore outing, *Sundown to Midnight*, is a pastiche of both buoyant reggae rhythms and

traditional punk rants.

The band finds its greatest success with the former, their adequate acquitting of the latter being marred by a lack of melodic sensibility. When resting within the lazy bounce of syn-copated rhythm ("Trial Tribulation") The Dingees sound just a shade shy of legit. Give credit to the band for incorporating horn charts sparingly, and for refusing to kowtow to the altar of maximum volume.

The Dingees don't just crib the musical posturing of the early ska



movement; *Sundown to Midnight* attempts the same social concern that gave pulse to seminal bands like The Clash and The Specials. The record works as both a youth rallying call ("Leave the Kids Alone," "Radio Freedom"), and a pointed chronicling of the activities that occur after the hours mentioned in the title (urban violence being chief among them). The Dingees don't offer any solutions, choosing instead to wax observational: *When you're walking through my city, gotta duck and dive/ 'cause in my city, bullets fly* is less protest than Polaroid. It is perhaps because of this sense of detachment that there is very little to make *Sundown to Midnight* especially exciting; for all its street smarts and tight musicianship, what the record lacks is the vitality of the late '70s Two-Tone recordings. This makes *Sundown* a sort of paint-by-numbers experience: the picture is pretty enough, but the process is distressingly predictable.

—J. Edward Keyes



Christine Glass  
*Love and Poverty*  
Rustproof Records

Two years is a long time to wait for a new album. In the case of Christine Glass, however, the two years between her records seemed to be a blessing. While dealing with personal struggles in her own life, she learned how to be truly happy and at peace. From those lessons stemmed *Love and Poverty*, full of hopeful lyrics for those experiencing difficulty.

As usual, Glass' style is smooth, with gentle guitars backed by her strong and breathy vocals. Harmonies are layered delicately throughout, creating a warm and inviting tone. Produced by Mark Byrd (Common Children) and Steve Hindalong (The Choir), her sound continues to be strong, yet delicate and radiant.

"The Way You're Calling," a medium-paced rock song

enhanced with violins and an extremely catchy melody, celebrates God's love for His

creation. Examples of rain and wind are used to demonstrate how God reveals Himself in life every day to call His people to His side. "Poverty," a mellow song with relaxing guitars, was written when Glass realized everyone needs to see some kind of poverty before they can experience true love for each other.

"Waterfall" is a heartfelt expression of appreciation for God's eternal love. While Glass describes feelings of loss and overwhelming sadness, she also shares, immersed in emotion, that God can take away those feelings. In "Mysterious," she continues to wonder in simple innocence about God's ways.

*Love and Poverty* ends powerfully with "Many Waters," taken from the *Wedding Cantata*, by Daniel Pinkham. The ethereal song, somewhat reminiscent of a Gregorian church service, finds Glass repeating the lyrics *Many waters cannot quench thou* in rounds to complete an enchanting moment.

*Love and Poverty* is a breath of fresh air. It has a slightly more polished quality than Glass' first album, but lyrically, it goes deeper than many current albums. *Love and Poverty* gives listeners a private look inside one Christian's personal growth and faith in God.

—Melody Alexander



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A recent email from a friend read, "I don't know how you got exclusive license for freaky road trips, but remind me not to take any with you until I've completely filled out all my insurance forms."

I guess this reputation started my senior year in college. I'd regularly wrangle friends into spontaneously going with me to Dallas, Kansas City, Branson—anywhere that had something unusual to do. Call it senioritis, call it cabin fever, I just had to get out and make memories. The more bizarre the quest, the more it intrigued me. To this day I regret never stopping at that "World's Largest Groundhog—Over 6' Tall" place. I mean, how many people can say they've seen the world's largest groundhog?

Back then, I looked for adventure. Lately, it seems I find it whether I want it or not. Even when it's something I *plan* on doing, like when I tried to cat-nap my friend's feline (Sissy Meow Meow) one night and replace it with my cat Puffin—a fiasco which ended up with her cat being thrown over an 8' fence, my cat being traumatized to the point of not eating for a week and me, dressed head-to-toe in black, covered in telltale white cat hair—things just don't seem to go as planned. A couple of months ago there was the five-car pileup in Chattanooga, Tenn., that totalled my friend's Accord (it wasn't my fault). Then there was Freak Nik—no further explanation needed. And then June's infamous Jetskiing Incident. Strange events surround me. But those pale in light of my recent trip home to Orlando.

First, while my friend and I were leaving Universal Studios, we were rear-ended. Then the next afternoon, just as my dad and I were pulling onto I-4, traffic screeched to a complete stop—where we sat for almost three hours without moving. But the worst was when I started heading back to Nashville.

All I wanted was to bring a table and chair back with me. That's all. I flew down, but since my mom was giving me some furniture (thanks, Mom), I decided to drive a cargo van back. Of course, when I arrived to pick it up, the rental place didn't have the van I reserved. All they had were 15' trucks (way too big for what I needed). So, they told me to try another location across town. We went. No van. The whole time I was reminded of that TV episode: "You obviously know how to *take* the reservation, you just don't know how to *HOLD* the reservation. And, really, holding the reservation is the most important part of the process." But I digress.

Against my will, I took the 15-footer. That table looked like the loneliest table in the world in the back of that huge truck, but oh well, I was finally on my way. I was cruising along (singing loudly with the radio) when, 149 miles into my 800-mile trip, the truck breaks down. I was near an exit, so I was able to coast to a gas station, where I waited for hours in the relentless Florida afternoon heat for a mechanic to come. When he finally arrived he took one look and pointed out the truck had *no oil*. A brand new truck, 13,000 miles, new truck smell, no oil. And it was a truck they *made* me take against my will. I had to get a new truck—but the nearest dealer was closed and I had to wait until the next day. Long story short, I was stranded in Alachua, Florida (the place I figure they find most daytime talk show guests) for 27 hours.

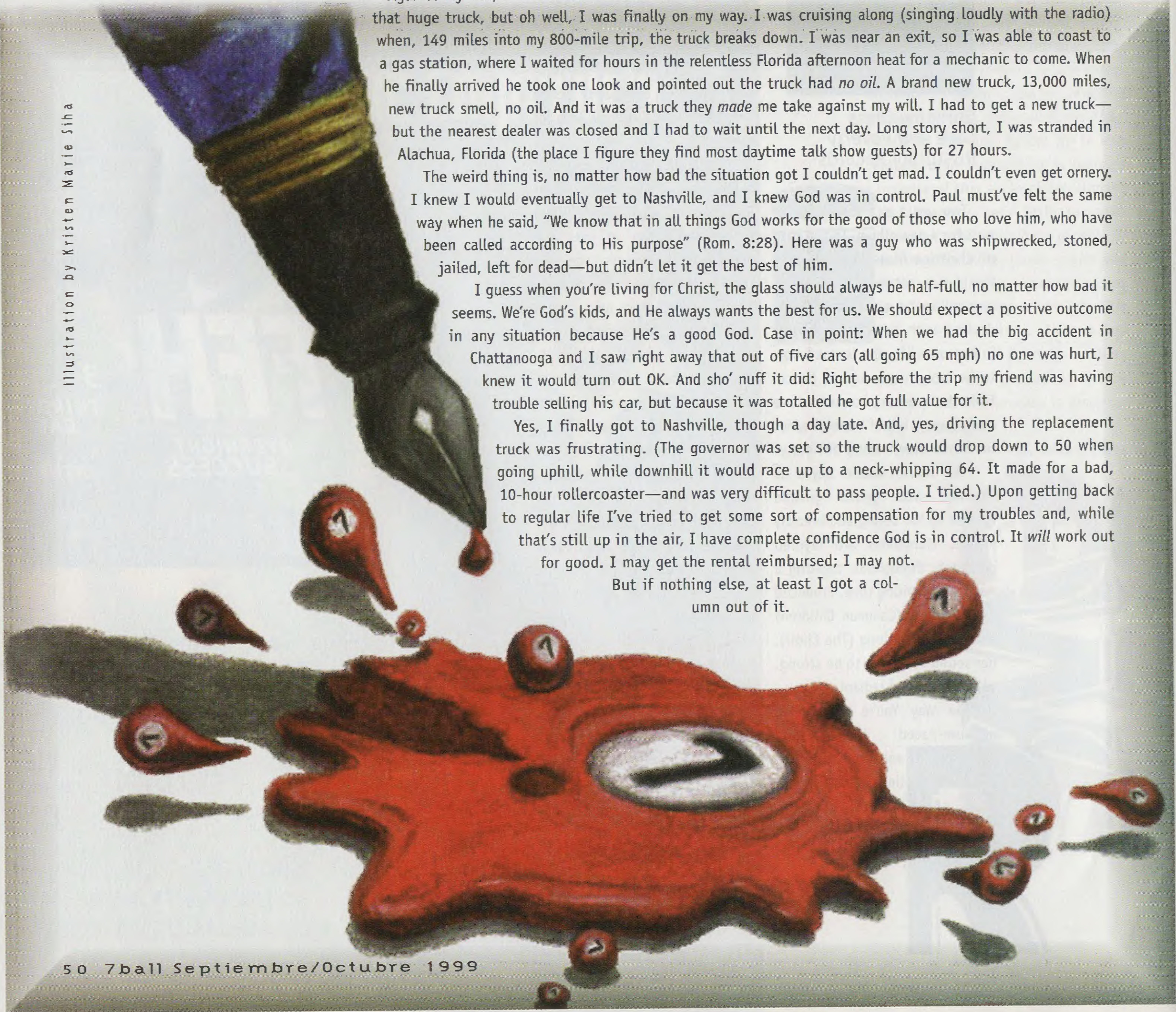
The weird thing is, no matter how bad the situation got I couldn't get mad. I couldn't even get ornery. I knew I would eventually get to Nashville, and I knew God was in control. Paul must've felt the same way when he said, "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). Here was a guy who was shipwrecked, stoned, jailed, left for dead—but didn't let it get the best of him.

I guess when you're living for Christ, the glass should always be half-full, no matter how bad it seems. We're God's kids, and He always wants the best for us. We should expect a positive outcome in any situation because He's a good God. Case in point: When we had the big accident in Chattanooga and I saw right away that out of five cars (all going 65 mph) no one was hurt, I knew it would turn out OK. And sho' nuff it did: Right before the trip my friend was having trouble selling his car, but because it was totalled he got full value for it.

Yes, I finally got to Nashville, though a day late. And, yes, driving the replacement truck was frustrating. (The governor was set so the truck would drop down to 50 when going uphill, while downhill it would race up to a neck-whipping 64. It made for a bad, 10-hour rollercoaster—and was very difficult to pass people. I tried.) Upon getting back to regular life I've tried to get some sort of compensation for my troubles and, while that's still up in the air, I have complete confidence God is in control. It *will* work out for good. I may get the rental reimbursed; I may not.

But if nothing else, at least I got a column out of it.

Illustration by Kristen Marie Siha



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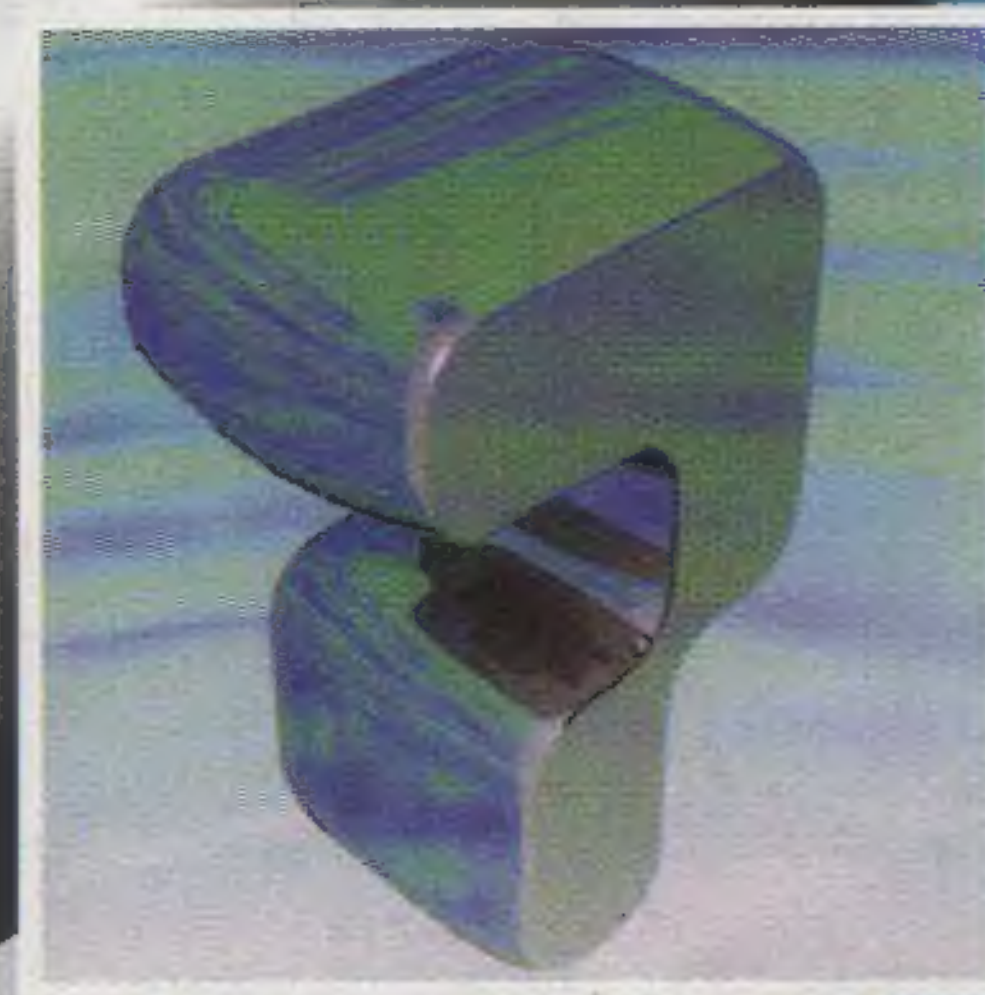
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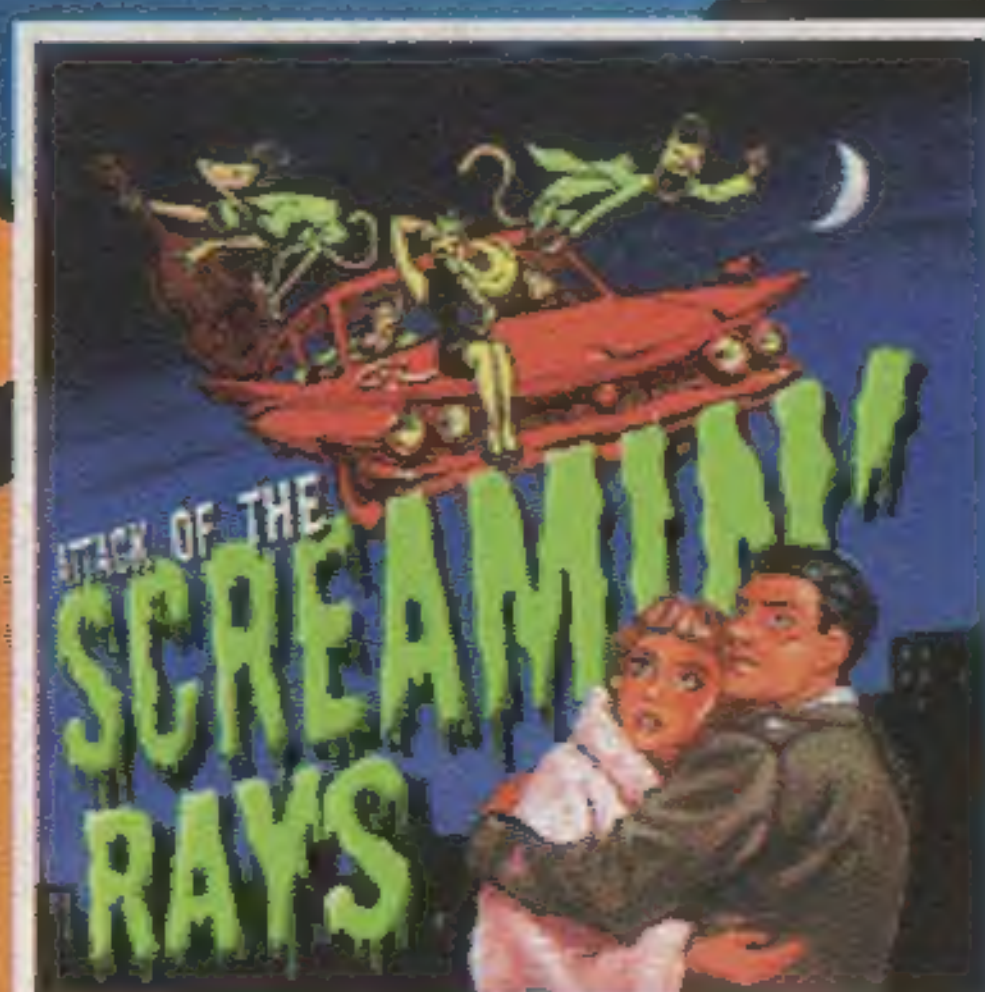
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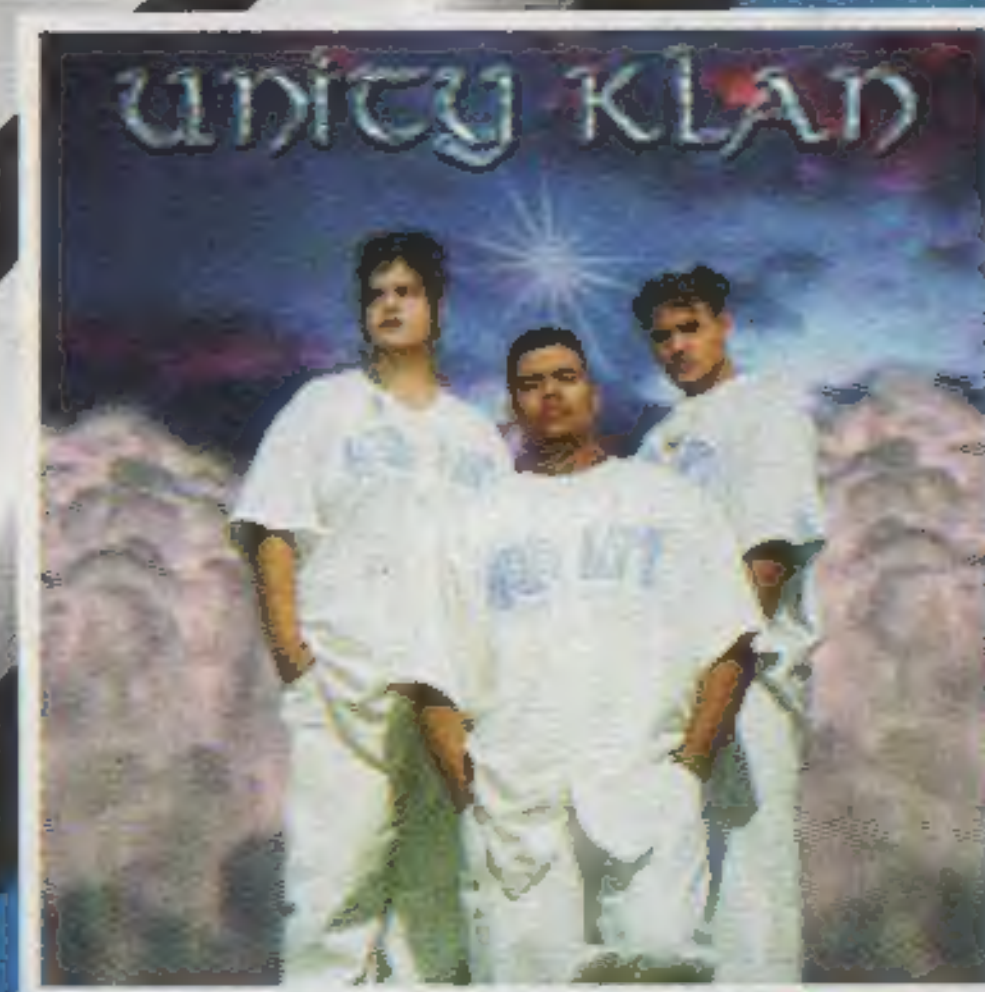
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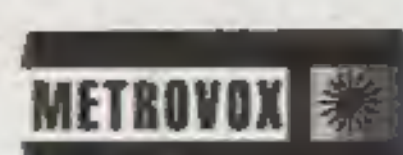
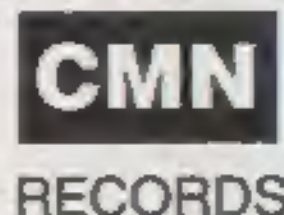
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